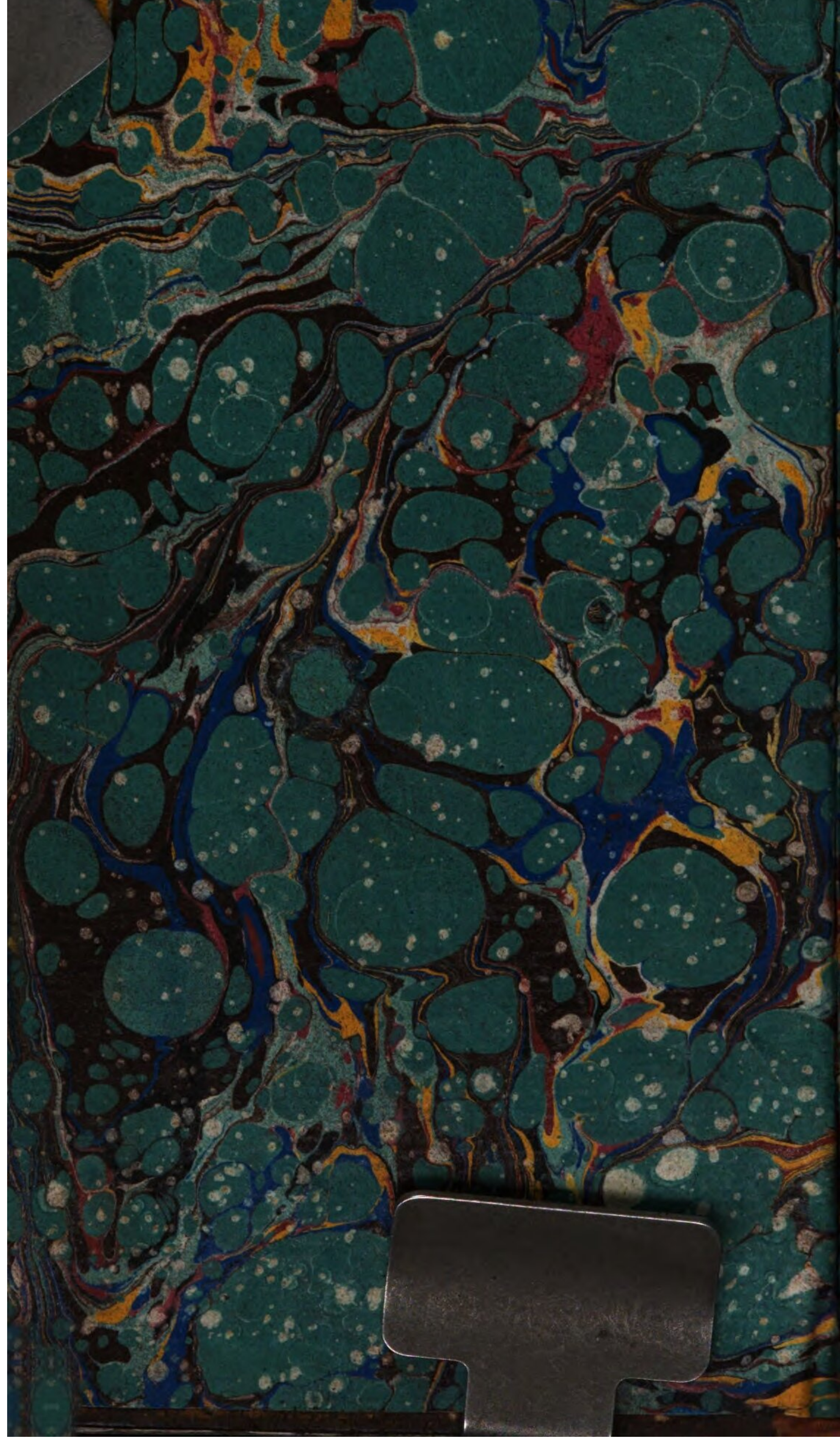
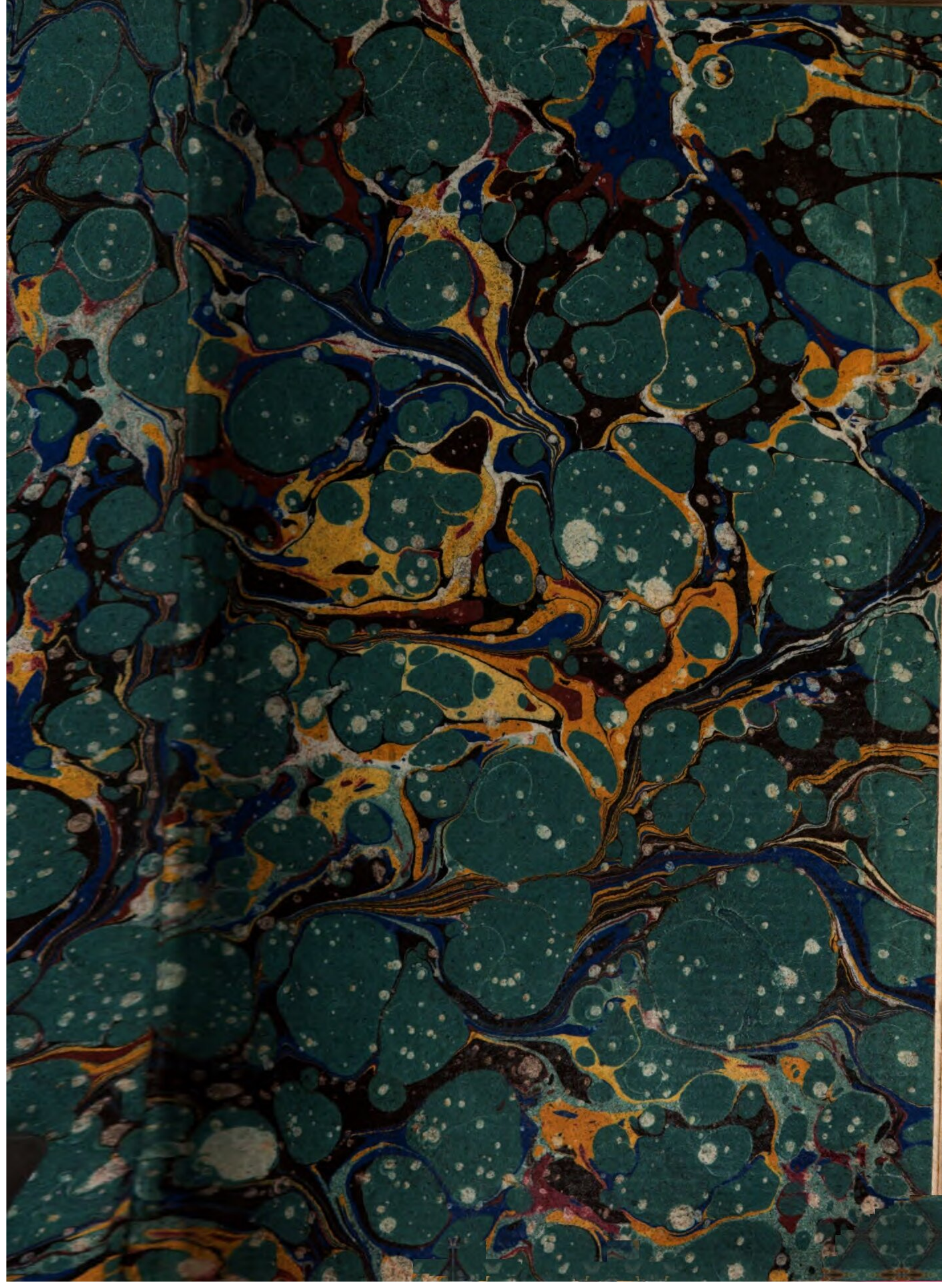






307

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THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.

Translated by
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T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XVII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Telemachus returning to the city, relates to Penelope the sum of his travels. Ulysses is conducted by Eumæus to the palace, where his old dog Argus acknowledges his master, after an absence of twenty years, and dies with joy. Eumæus returns into the country, and Ulysses remains among the suitors, whose behaviour is described.

S OON as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Sprinkled with roseate light the dewy lawn ;
 In haste the prince arose, prepar'd to part ;
 His hand impatient grasps the pointed dart ;
 Fair on his feet the polish'd sandals shine,
 And thus he greets the master of the swine.

My friend adieu ; let this short stay suffice ;
 I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes,
 And end her tears, her sorrows, and her sighs.

}

v. 8. *I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes.*] There are two reasons for the return of Telemachus ; one, the duty a son owes to a mother ; the other, to find an opportunity to put in execution the designs concerted with Ulysses : the poet therefore shifts the scene from the lodge to the palace. Telemachus takes not Ulysses along with him, for fear he should raise suspicion in the suitors, that a person in a beggar's garb has some secret merit, to obtain the familiarity of a king's son, and this might be an occasion of a discovery ; whereas when Ulysses afterwards appears amongst the suitors, he is thought to be an entire stranger to Telemachus, which prevents all jealousy, and gives them an opportunity to carry on their measures, without any particular observation. Besides, Eumæus is still to be kept in ignorance concerning the person of Ulysses.

But thou attentive, what we order heed ; 10

This hapless stranger to the city lead ;

By public bounty let him there be fed,

And bless the hand that stretches forth the bread.

To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes,

My will may covet, but my pow'r denies. 15

If this raise anger in the stranger's thought,

The pain of anger punishes the fault :

The very truth I undisguis'd declare :

For what so easy as to be sincere ?

To this Ulysses. What the prince requires 20

Of swift removal, seconds my desires.

To want like mine, the peopled town can yield

More hopes of comfort, than the lonely field.

Nor fits my age to till the labour'd lands,

Or stoop to tasks a rural lord demands. 25

ses ; Telemachus therefore gives him a plausible reason for his return ; namely, that his mother may no longer be in pain for his safety : this likewise excellently contributes to deceive Eumæus. Now as the presence of Ulysses in the palace is absolutely necessary to bring about the suitors destruction, Telemachus orders Eumæus to conduct him thither, and by this method he comes as the friend and guest of Eumæus, not of Telemachus : moreover, this injunction was necessary : Eumæus was a person of such generosity, that he would have thought himself obliged to detain his guest under his own care and inspection : nay, before he guides him towards the palace, in the sequel of this book, he tells Ulysses he does it solely in compliance with the order of Telemachus, and acts contrary to his own inclinations.

v. 14. *To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes,*

My will may covet, but my pow'r denies.]

This might appear too free a declaration, if Telemachus had made it before he knew Ulysses ; for no circumstance could justify him for using any disregard toward the poor and stranger, according to the strict notions, and the sanctity of the laws of hospitality amongst the antients : but as the case stands, we are not in the least shocked at the words of Telemachus ; we know the reason why he thus speaks ; it is to conceal Ulysses. He is so far from shewing any particular regard to him, that he treats him with a severity in some degree contrary to the laws of hospitality ; by adding, that if he complains of this hard usage, the complaint will not redress but increase his calamity.

Adieu! but since this ragged garb can bear
 So ill, th' inclemencies of morning air,
 A few hours space permit me here to stay;
 My steps Eumæus shall to town convey,
 With riper beams when Phœbus warms the day. 30

Thus he: nor ought Telemachus reply'd,
 But left the mansion with a lofty stride:
 Schemes of revenge his pond'ring breast elate,
 Revolving deep the suitors sudden fate.

Arriving now before th' imperial hall;
 He props his spear against the pillar'd wall;
 Then like a lion o'er the threshold bounds;
 The marble pavement with his step resounds;
 His eye first glanc'd where Euryclea spreads
 With furry spoils of beasts the splendid beds: 40
 She saw, she wept, she ran with eager pace,
 And reach'd her master with a long embrace.

All crowded round, the family appears
 With wild entrancement, and extatic tears.
 Swift from above descends the royal fair;
 (Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear,
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air) 45

v. 46. *Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear,
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.*]

This description presents us with a noble idea of the beauty and chastity of Penelope; her "person resembles Venus, but Venus with the modest air of Diana." Dionysius Halicarn. takes notice of the beauty and softness of these two verses.

"Η δ' ἔν ἐκ θαλάμοιο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
 Ἀρτέμιδι ἰκέλη, ἡ δὲ χρυσῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ.

When Homer (remarks that author) paints a beautiful face, or an engaging object, he chuses the softest vowels, and most smooth and flowing semivowels: he never clogs the pronunciation with rough sounds, and a collision of untunable consonants, but every syllable, every letter conspires to exhibit the beauty of the object he endeavours to represent: there are no less than three and thirty vowels in two lines, and no more than twenty-nine consonants, which makes the verses flow away with an agreeable smoothness and harmony.

Hangs o'er her son; in his embraces dies;
 Rains kisses on his neck, his face, his eyes:
 Few words she spoke, tho' much she had to say, 50
 And scarce those few, for tears, could force their way.

Light of my eyes! he comes! unhop'd-for joy!
 Has heav'n from Pylos brought my lovely boy?
 So snatch'd from all our cares!—Tell, hast thou known
 Thy father's fate, and tell me all thy own. 55

Oh dearest, most rever'd of womankind!
 Cease with those tears to melt a manly mind,
 (Reply'd the prince) nor be our fates deplor'd,
 From death and treason to thy arms restor'd.
 Go bathe, and rob'd in white, ascend the tow'rs; 60
 With all thy handmaids thank th' immortal pow'rs;
 To ev'ry god vow hecatombs to bleed,
 And call Jove's vengeance on their guilty deed.
 While to th' assembled council I repair;
 A stranger sent by heav'n attends me there; 65

Penelope, we see, embraces her son with the utmost affection: "kissing the lip" was not in fashion in the days of Homer; "No one (remarks the bishop) ever kisses the lip or mouth." Penelope here kisses her son's eyes, and his head; that is, his cheek, or perhaps forehead; and Eumæus, in the preceding book, embraces the hands, eyes, and head of Telemachus. But for the comfort of the ladies, I rejoice to observe that all these were ceremonious kisses from a mother to a son, or from an inferior to a superior: this therefore is no argument that lovers thus embraced, nor ought it to be brought as a reason why the present manner of salutation should be abrogated. Madam Dacier has been so tender as to keep it a secret from the men, that there ever was a time in which the modern method of kissing was not in fashion: she highly deserves their thanks and gratitude for it.

v. 65. *A stranger sent by heav'n attends me there.*] There is a vein of sincere piety that runs through the words and actions of Telemachus: he has no sooner delivered his mother from her uneasy apprehensions concerning his safety, but he proceeds to another act of virtue toward Theoclymenus, whom he had taken into his protection: he performs his duty towards men and towards the gods. It is by his direction that Penelope offers up her devotions for success, and thanks for his return. It is he who prescribes the manner of it; namely, by washing the hands, in token of the purity of mind required by those who supplicate the deities; and by put-

My new accepted guest I haste to find,
Now to Piræus' honour'd charge consign'd.

The matron heard, nor was his word in vain.
She bath'd; and rob'd in white, with all her train,
To every god vow'd hecatombs to bleed, 70
And call'd Jove's vengeance on the guilty deed.
Arm'd with his lance the prince then past the gate;
Two dogs behind, a faithful guard await;
Pallas his form with grace divine improves:
The gazing croud admires him as he moves: 75
Him, gath'ring round, the haughty suitors greet
With semblance fair, but inward deep deceit.
Their false addresses gen'rous he deny'd,
Past on, and sat by faithful Mentor's side;
With Antiphus, and Halitherses sage, 80
(His father's counsellours, rever'd for age.)
Of his own fortunes, and Ulysses' fame,
Much ask'd the seniors; 'till Piræus came.
The stranger-guest pursu'd him close behind;
Whom when Telemachus beheld, he join'd. 85
He, (when Piræus ask'd for slaves to bring
The gifts and treasures of the Spartan king)
Thus thoughtful answer'd: Those we shall not move,
Dark and unconscious of the will of Jove;
We know not yet the full event of all: 90
Stabb'd in his palace if your prince must fall,
Us, and our house if treason must o'erthrow,
Better a friend possess them, than a foe:

ting on clean garments, to shew the reverence and regard with which their souls ought to be possess'd when they appear before the gods. I am not sensible that the last ceremony is often mentioned in other parts of Homer; yet I doubt not but it was practis'd upon all religious solemnities. The moral of the whole is, that piety is a sure way to victory: Telemachus appears every where a good man, and for this reason he becomes at last an happy one; and his calamities contribute to his glory.

If death to these, and vengeance heav'n decree,
Riches are welcome then, not else, to me. 95

'Till then, retain the gifts.—The hero said,
And in his hand the willing stranger led.

Then dis-array'd, the shining bath they sought,
(With unguents smooth) of polish'd marble wrought;
Obedient handmaids with assistant toil 100

Supply the limpid wave, and fragrant oil :

Then o'er their limbs refulgent robes they threw,
And fresh from bathing to their seats withdrew.

The golden ew'r a nymph attendant brings,
Replenish'd from the pure, translucent springs; 105

With copious streams that golden ew'r supplies
A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash : the table, in fair order spread,
Is pil'd with viands and the strength of bread.

Full opposite, before the folding gate, 110

The pensive mother sits in humble state ;

Lowly she sat, and with dejected view

The fleecy threads her ivory fingers drew.

The prince and stranger shar'd the genial feast,

'Till now the rage of thirst and hunger ceas'd. 115

When thus the queen. My son ! my only friend !
Say, to my mournful couch shall I ascend ?

v. 117. *Say, to my mournful couch, &c.*] Penelope had requested Telemachus to give her an account of his voyage to Pyle, and of what he had heard concerning Ulysses. He there waved the discourse, because the queen was in public with her female attendants : by this conduct the poet sustains both their characters ; Penelope is impatient to hear of Ulysses ; and this agrees with the affection of a tender wife ; but the discovery being unseasonable, Telemachus forbears to satisfy her curiosity : in which he acts like a wise man. Here (observes Eustathius) she gently reproaches him for not satisfying her impatience concerning her husband ; she insinuates that it is a piece of cruelty to permit her still to grieve, when it is in his power to give her comfort ; and this induces him to gratify her desires. It ought to be observed, that Homer chuses a proper time for this relation ; it was necessary that the suitors should be ignorant of the story of Ulysses ; Telemachus therefore makes it when they are withdrawn to their sports, and when none were present but friends.

(The couch deserted now a length of years;
 The couch for ever water'd with my tears)
 Say wilt thou not (ere yet the suitor-crew 120
 Return, and riot shakes our walls a-new)
 Say wilt thou not the least account afford?
 The least glad tidings of my absent lord?

To her the youth. We reach'd the Pylian plains,
 Where Nestor, shepherd of his people, reigns. 125
 All arts of tendernefs to him are known,
 Kind to Ulysses' race as to his own;
 No father with a fonder grasp of joy,
 Strains to his bosom his long-absent boy.
 But all unknown, if yet Ulysses breathe, 130
 Or glide a spectre in the realms beneath;
 For further search, his rapid steeds transport
 My lengthen'd journey to the Spartan court.
 There Argive Helen I beheld, whose charms
 (So heav'n decreed) engag'd the great in arms. 135
 My cause of coming told, he thus rejoin'd;
 And still his words live perfect in my mind.

Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane!

v. 134. *There Argive Helen I beheld, whose charms*
(So heav'n decreed) &c.]

Eustathius takes notice of the candid behaviour of Telemachus with respect to Helen: she had received him courteously, and he testifies his gratitude, by ascribing the calamities she drew upon her country to the decree of heaven, not to her immodesty: this is particularly decent in the mouth of Telemachus, because he is now acquainted with his father's return; otherwise he could not have mentioned her name but to her dishonour, who had been the occasion of his death.

v. 138. *Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train, &c.]* These verses are repeated from the fourth Odyssey; and are not without a good effect; they cannot fail of comforting Penelope, by assuring her that Ulysses is alive, and restrained by Calypso involuntarily; they give her hopes of his return, and the satisfaction of hearing his glory from the mouth of Menelaus. The conciseness of Telemachus is likewise remarkable; he recapitulates in thirty-eight

So with her young, amid the woodland shades, 140

A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades,

Leaves in that fatal lair her tender fawns,

And climbs the cliff, or feeds along the lawns ;

Meantime returning, with remorseless sway

The monarch savage rends the panting prey : 145

With equal fury, and with equal fame,

Shall great Ulysses re-assert his claim.

O Jove ! supreme ! whom men and gods revere ;

And thou whose lustre gilds the rolling sphere !

With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid 150

The chief adopted by the martial maid !

Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,

As when, contending on the Lesbian shore,

His prowess Philomelides confest,

And loud acclaiming Greeks the victor blest : 155

Then soon th' invaders of his bed, and throne,

Their love presumptuous shall by death atone.

Now what you question of my antient friend,

With truth I answer ; thou the truth attend.

Learn what I heard the * sea-born seer relate, 160

Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

Sole in an isle, imprison'd by the main,

The sad survivor of his num'rous train,

Ulysses lies ; detain'd by magic charms,

And prest unwilling in Calypso's arms. 165

No sailors there, no vessels to convey,

Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way——

This told Atrides, and he told no more.

Thence safe I voyag'd to my native shore.

He ceas'd ; nor made the pensive queen reply, 170

But droop'd her head, and drew a secret sigh.

Lines the subject of almost three books, the third, the fourth, and fifth ; he selects every circumstance that can please Penelope, and drops those that would give her pain.

When Theoclymenus the seer began :

Oh suff'ring consort of the suff'ring man !

What human knowledge could, those kings might tell ;

But I the secrets of high heav'n reveal.

175

Before the first of gods be this declar'd,

Before the board whose blessings we have shar'd ;

Witness the genial rites, and witness all

This house holds sacred in her ample wall !

Ev'n now this instant, great Ulysses lay'd

180

At rest, or wand'ring in his country's shade,

Their guilty deeds, in hearing, and in view

Secret revolves ; and plans the vengeance due.

Of this sure auguries the gods bestow'd,

When first our vessel anchor'd in your road.

185

Succeed those omens heav'n ! (the queen rejoin'd)

So shall our bounties speak a grateful mind ;

v. 172. *When Theoclymenus the seer began, &c.*] It is with great judgment that the poet here introduces Theoclymenus ; he is a person that has no direct relation to the story of the Odyssey, yet because he appears accidentally in it, Homer unites him very artificially with it, that he may not appear to no purpose, and as an useless ornament. He here speaks as an augur, and what he utters contributes to the perseverance of Penelope in resisting the addresses of the suitors, by assuring her of the return of Ulysses ; and consequently in some degree Theoclymenus promotes the principal action. But it may be said, if it was necessary that Penelope should be informed of his return, why does not Telemachus assure her of it, who was fully acquainted with the truth ? The answer is, that Penelope is not to be fully informed, but only encouraged by a general hope : Theoclymenus speaks from his art, which may possibly be liable to error ; but Telemachus must have spoken from knowledge, which would have been contrary to the injunctions of Ulysses, and might have proved fatal by an unseasonable discovery : it was therefore judicious in the poet to put the assurance of the return of Ulysses into the mouth of Theoclymenus, and not of Telemachus.

There is an expression in this speech, which in the Greek is remarkable ; literally it is to be rendered, " Ulysses is now sitting or " creeping in Ithaca," *ἤμενον ἢ ἐκπών* ; that is, Ulysses is returned and concealed : it is taken from the posture of a person in the act of endeavouring to hide himself : he sits down or creeps upon the ground. Eustathius explains it by *κρύφα, ἧς ἔκαστος ὁρᾷ. Βαδίζον.*

And ev'ry envy'd happiness attend
The man, who calls Penelope his friend.

Thus commun'd they : while in the marble court 190
(Scene of their insolence) the lords resort ;
Athwart the spacious square each tries his art
To whirl the disk, or aim the missile dart.

Now did the hour of sweet repast arrive,
And from the field the victim flocks they drive : 195
Medon the herald (one who pleas'd them best,
And honour'd with a portion of their feast)
To bid the banquet, interrupts their play.
Swift to the hall they haste ; aside they lay
Their garments, and succinct, the victims slay. 200 }

v. 192. ——— *each tries his art*
To whirl the disk, or aim the missile dart.]

Eustathius remarks that though the suitors were abandoned to luxury, vice, and intemperance, yet they exercise themselves in laudable sports : they toss the quoit, and throw the javelin, which are both heroic diversions, and form the body into strength and activity. This is owing to the virtue of the age, not the persons : such sports were fashionable, and therefore used by the suitors, and not because they were heroic. However they may instruct us never to give ourselves up to idleness and inaction ; but to make our very diversions subservient to nobler views, and turn a pleasure into a virtue.

v. 196. *Medon the herald, one who pleas'd them best.]* We may observe that the character of Medon is very particular ; he is at the same time a favourite of the suitors, and Telemachus, persons entirely opposite in their interest. It seldom happens any man can please two parties, without acting an insincere part : Atticus was indeed equally acceptable to the two factions of Cæsar and Pompey, but it was because he seemed neutral, and acted as if they were both his friends ; or rather he was a man of such eminent virtues, that they esteemed it an honour to have him thought their friend. Homer every where represents Medon as a person of integrity ; he is artful, but not criminal : no doubt but he made all compliances, that consisted with probity, with the suitors dispositions ; by this method he saved Penelope more effectually than if he had shewed a more rigid virtue. He made himself master of their hearts by an insinuating behaviour, and was a spy upon their actions. Eustathius compares him to a buskin that fits both legs, αἶνον τις κόθον ; he seems to have been an Anti-Cato, and practised a virtuous gaiety.

Then sheep and goats and bristly porkers bled,
And the proud steer was o'er the marble spread.

While thus the copious banquet they provide;
Along the road conversing side by side,

Proceed Ulysses and the faithful swain :

205

When thus Eumæus, gen'rous and humane.

To town, observant of our lord's behest,
Now let us speed ; my friend, no more my guest !

Yet like myself I wish'd thee here preferr'd,

Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd.

210

But much to raise my master's wrath I fear ;

The wrath of princes ever is severe.

Then heed his will, and be our journey made

While the broad beams of Phœbus are display'd,

Or ere brown ev'ning spreads her chilly shade. 215

Just thy advice, (the prudent chief rejoin'd)

And such as suits the dictate of my mind.

Lead on : but help me to some staff to stay

My feeble step, since rugged is the way.

Across his shoulders, then the scrip he flung, 220

Wide patch'd, and fasten'd by a twisted thong.

A staff Eumæus gave. Along the way

Cheerly they fare : behind, the keepers stay ;

v. 210. *Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd.*] Such little traits as these are very delightful ; for the reader knowing that the person to whom this offer is made, is Ulysses, cannot fail of being diverted to see the honest and loyal Eumæus promising to make his master and king the keeper of his herds or stalls, *σαθμῶν* ; and this is offered as a piece of good fortune or dignity.

v. 215. ——— *ere ev'ning spreads her chilly shade.*] Eustathius gathers from these words, that the time of the action of the *Odyssey* was in the end of autumn, or beginning of winter, when the mornings and evenings are cold : thus Ulysses, in the beginning of this book, makes the coldness of the morning an excuse for not going with Telemachus ; his rags being but an ill defence against it : and here Eumæus mentions the coldness of the evening, as a reason why they should begin their journey in the heat of the day ; so that it was now probably about ten of the clock, and they arrive at Ithaca at noon : from hence we may conjecture, that the lodge of Eumæus was five or six miles from the city : that is, about a two hours walk.

These with their watchful dogs (a constant guard)
 Supply his absence, and attend the herd. 225
 And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes,
 Alas ! how chang'd ! a man of miseries ;
 Propt on a staff, a beggar old and bare,
 In rags dishonest flutt'ring with the air !
 Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down 230
 The cavern'd way descending to the town,
 Where, from the rock, with liquid lapse distills
 A limpid fount ; that spread in parting rills
 Its current thence to serve the city brings :
 An useful work ! adorn'd by antient kings. 235
 Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor there
 In sculptur'd stone immortaliz'd their care,
 In marble urns receiv'd it from above,
 And shaded with a green furrounding grove ;

v. 224. *These with their watchful dogs —*] It is certain that if these little particulars had been omitted, there would have been no chasm in the connexion ; why then does Homer insert such circumstances unnecessarily, which, it must be allowed, are of no importance, and add nothing to the perfection of the story ? nay, they are such as may be thought trivial, and unworthy the dignity of epic poetry. But, as Dacier very well observes, they are a kind of painting : were a painter to draw this subject, he would undoubtedly insert into the piece these herdsmen and dogs after the manner of Homer ; they are natural ornaments, and consequently are no disgrace either to the poet or the painter.

It is observable that Homer gives us an exact draught of the country ; he sets before us as in a picture, the city, the circular grove of poplars adjacent, the fountain falling from a rock, and the altar sacred to the nymphs, erected on the point of it. We are as it were transported into Ithaca, and travel with Ulysses and Eumæus : Homer verifies the observation of Horace above all poets ; namely, that poetry is painting.

v. 236. *Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor —*] Public benefactions demand public honours and acknowledgments ; for this reason Homer makes an honourable mention of these three brothers. Ithaca was a small island, and destitute of plenty of fresh water ; this fountain therefore was a public good to the whole region about it ; and has given immortality to the authors of it. They were the sons of Pterelaus (as Eustathius informs us ;) Ithacus gave name to the country, Neritus to a mountain, and Polyctor to a place called Polyctorium.

Where silver alders, in high arches twin'd, 240
 Drink the cold stream, and tremble to the wind.
 Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen
 A mossy altar, deep embower'd in green ;
 Where constant vows by travellers are paid,
 And holy horrors solemnize the shade. 245

Here with his goats, (not vow'd to sacred flame,
 But pamper'd luxury) Melanthius came ;
 Two grooms attend him. With an envious look
 He ey'd the stranger, and imperious spoke.

The good old proverb how this pair fulfil ! 250
 One rogue is usher to another still.
 Heav'n with a secret principle indu'd
 Mankind, to seek their own similitude.
 Where goes the swine-herd with that ill-look'd guest ?
 That giant-glutton, dreadful at a feast ! 255
 Full many a post have those broad shoulders worn,
 From ev'ry great man's gate repuls'd with scorn ;
 To no brave prize aspir'd the worthless swain,
 'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.

v. 258. *To no brave prize aspir'd the worthless swain,
 'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.]*

Dacier is very singular in her interpretation of this passage: she imagines it has a reference to the games practised amongst the suitors, and to the rewards of the victors, which were usually tripods and beautiful captives. "Thinkest thou (says Melanthius) that this beggar will obtain the victory in our sports, and that they will give him as the reward of his valour, some beautiful slave, or some precious tripod?" But in Homer there is nothing that gives the least countenance to this explication: he thus literally speaks: this fellow "by going from door to door will meet with correction, while he begs meanly for a few scraps, not for things of price, such as a captive or tripod." Eustathius explains it as spoken in contempt of Ulysses; that he appears to be such a vile person, as to have no ambition or hope to expect any thing better than a few scraps, nor to aspire to the rewards of nobler strangers, such as captives or tripods. "Ακοιοι, says the same author, are the minute crumbs of bread, σμικρότατοι ψωμοί. I am persuaded, that the reader will subscribe to the judgment of Eustathius, if he considers the construction, and that ἀορας and λείοντας

To beg, than work, he better understands; 260
 Or we perhaps might take him off thy hands.
 For any office could the slave be good,
 To cleanse the fold, or help the kids to food,
 If any labour those big joints could learn;
 Some whey, to wash his bowels, he might earn. 265
 To cringe, to whine, his idle hands to spread,
 Is all, by which that graceless maw is fed.
 Yet hear me! if thy impudence but dare
 Approach yon' walls, I prophecy thy fare:
 Dearly, full dearly shalt thou buy thy bread 270
 With many a footstool thund'ring at thy head.

He thus: nor insolent of word alone,
 Spurn'd with his rustic heel his king unknown;
 Spurn'd, but not mov'd: he, like a pillar stood,
 Nor stirr'd an inch, contemptuous, from the road: 275
 Doubtful, or with his staff to strike him dead,
 Or greet the pavement with his worthless head.

are governed by αἰτίζων as effectually as ἀκόλας, and therefore must refer to the same act of begging, not of claiming by victory in the games; αἰτίζων is not a word that can here express a reward, but only a charity: besides, would it not be absurd to say that a beggar goes from door to door asking alms, and not rewards bestowed upon victors in public exercises? The words πολλῇσι φιλῇσι make the sense general, they denote the life of a beggar, which is to go from door to door, and consequently they ought not to be confined solely to the suitors, and if not, they can have no reference to any games, or to any rewards bestowed upon such occasions. Besides, it is scarce to be conceived that Melanthius could think this beggar capable of being admitted into the company, much less into the diversion of the suitors, who were all persons of high birth and station. It is true, lib. xxi. Ulysses is permitted to try the bow, but this is through the peculiar grace of Telemachus, who knew the beggar to be Ulysses; and entirely contrary to their injunctions.

From this passage we may correct an error in Hesychius: ἄορες (says he) are γυναῖκες ἢ τρίποδες: the sentence is evidently maimed, for Hesychius undoubtedly thus wrote it, ἄορες γυναῖκες λέγονται, for thus (adds he) Homer uses it:

— ἐν ἄορας ἐδὲ λέοντας.

That is (says Hesychius) ἢ γυναῖκας ἐδὲ τρίποδες, referring to this verse of the Odyssey.

Short was that doubt; to quell his rage inur'd,
 The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endur'd.
 But hateful of the wretch, Eumæus heav'd 280
 His hands obtesting, and this pray'r conceiv'd.
 Daughters of Jove! who from th' ætherial bow'rs
 Descend to swell the springs, and feed the flow'rs!
 Nymphs of this fountain! to whose sacred names
 Our rural victims mount in blazing flames! 285
 To whom Ulysses' piety preferr'd
 The yearly firstlings of his flock, and herd;
 Succeed my wish; your votary restore:
 Oh be some god his convoy to our shore!
 Due pains shall punish then this slave's offence, 290
 And humble all his airs of insolence,
 Who proudly stalking, leaves the herds at large,
 Commences courtier, and neglects his charge.
 What mutters he? (Melanthius sharp rejoins)
 This crafty miscreant big with dark designs? 295
 The day shall come; nay, 'tis already near,
 When slave! to sell thee at a price too dear,

v. 279. *The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endur'd.*] Homer excellently sustains the character of Ulysses; he is a man of patience, and master of all his passions; he is here misused by one of his own servants, yet is so far from returning the injury, that he stifles the sense of it, without speaking one word: it is true he is described as having a conflict in his soul; but this is no derogation to his character: not to feel like a man is insensibility, not virtue; but to repress the emotions of the heart, and keep them within the bounds of moderation, this argues wisdom, and turns an injury into a virtue and glory. There is an excellent contrast between the benevolent Eumæus and the insolent Melanthius. Eumæus resents the outrage of Melanthius more than Ulysses; he is moved with indignation, but how does he express it? Not by railing, but by an appeal to heaven in a prayer: a conduct worthy to be imitated in more enlightened ages. The word ἀγλαΐας here bears a peculiar signification: it does not imply voluptuousness as usually, but pride, and means that Ulysses would spoil his haughty airs, if he should ever return: this interpretation agrees with what follows, where Eumæus reproaches him for despising his rural charge, and aspiring to politeness, or, as we express it, to be a man of the town.

Must be my care; and hence transport thee o'er,
(A load and scandal to this happy shore.)

Oh! that as surely great Apollo's dart, 300
Or some brave suitor's sword, might pierce the heart
Of the proud son; as that we stand this hour
In lasting safety from the father's pow'r.

So spoke the wretch; but shunning farther fray,
Turn'd his proud step, and left them on their way.
Straight to the feastful palace he repair'd, 306
Familiar enter'd, and the banquet shar'd;
Beneath Eurymachus, his patron lord,
He took his place, and plenty heap'd the board.

Meantime they heard, soft-circling in the sky, 310
Sweet airs ascend, and heav'nly minstrelsie;
(For Phemius to the lyre attun'd the strain:)
Ulysses hearken'd, then address the swain.

Well may this palace admiration claim,
Great, and respondent to the master's fame! 315
Stage above stage th' imperial structure stands,
Holds the chief honours and the town commands:
High walls and battlements the courts inclose,
And the strong gates defy a host of foes.

v. 308. *Beneath Eurymachus* ——— *He took his place* ———]
We may gather from hence the truth of an observation formerly
made, That Melanthius, Eumæus, &c. were persons of distinc-
tion, and their offices posts of honour: we see Melanthius, who
had charge of the goats of Ulysses, is a companion for princes.

The reason why Melanthius in particular associates himself with
Eurymachus is, an intrigue which that prince holds with Melan-
tho his sister, as appears from the following book. There is a
confederacy and league between them, and we find they all suffer
condign punishment in the end of the *Odyssey*.

v. 318. *High walls and battlements, &c.*] We have here a very
particular draught or plan of the palace of Ulysses; it is a kind of
castle, at once designed for strength and magnificence: this we
may gather from *ὑπεροπλίσσασαίλο*, which Hesychius explains by
ὑπερπνιδῆσαι ὑπερβῆναι, not easily to be surmounted, or forced by
arms.

Homer artfully introduces Ulysses struck with wonder at the
beauty of the palace; this is done to confirm Eumæus in the

Far other cares its dwellers now employ : 320
The throng'd assembly, and the feast of joy :
I see the smokes of sacrifice aspire,
And hear (what graces ev'ry feast) the lyre.

Then thus Eumæus. Judge we which were best ;
Amidst yon' revellers a sudden guest 325
Chuse you to mingle, while behind I stay ?
Or I first ent'ring introduce the way ?
Wait for a space without, but wait not long ;
This is the house of violence and wrong :
Some rude insult thy rev'rend age may bear ; 330
For like their lawless lords, the servants are.

Just is, oh friend ! thy caution, and addrest
(Reply'd the chief) to no unheedful breast ;
The wrongs and injuries of base mankind
Fresh to my sense, and always in my mind. 335
The bravely-patient to no fortune yields ;
On rolling oceans, and in fighting fields,
Storms have I past, and many a stern debate ;
And now in humbler scene submit to fate.
What cannot want ? the best she will expose, 340
And I am learn'd in all her train of woes ;
She fills with navies, hosts, and loud alarms
The sea, the land, and shakes the world with arms !

Thus, near the gates conferring as they drew,
Argus, the dog, his antient master knew ; 345

opinion that Ulysses is really the beggar he appears to be, and a perfect stranger among the Ithacans : thus also when he complains of hunger, he speaks the language of a beggar, as Eustathius remarks, to persuade Eumæus that he takes his journey to the court, solely out of want and hunger.

v. 345. *Argus, the dog, his antient master knew, &c.*] This whole episode has fallen under the ridicule of the critics ; Monsieur Perrault's in particular : " The dunghill before the palace " (says that author) is more proper for a peasant than a king ; " and it is beneath the dignity of poetry to describe the dog Argus almost devoured with vermin." It must be allowed, that such a familiar episode could not have been properly introduced

He, not unconscious of the voice, and tread,
 Lifts to the sound his ear, and rears his head;
 Bred by Ulysses, nourish'd at his board,
 But ah! not fated long to please his lord!
 To him, his swiftness and his strength were vain;
 The voice of glory call'd him o'er the main. 351

'Till then in ev'ry silvan chace renown'd,
 With Argus, Argus, rung the woods around;
 With him the youth pursu'd the goat or fawn,
 Or trac'd the mazy leveret o'er the lawn. 355

Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
 Unhous'd, neglected in the public way.
 And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
 Obscene with reptiles, took his sordid bed.

He knew his lord; he knew, and strove to meet;
 In vain he strove, to crawl, and kiss his feet; 361

into the Iliad: it is writ in a nobler style, and distinguished by a boldness of sentiments and diction; whereas the Odyssey descends to the familiar, and is calculated more for common than heroic life. What Homer says of Argus is very natural, and I do not know any thing more beautiful or more affecting in the whole poem: I dare appeal to every person's judgment, if Argus be not as justly and properly represented, as the noblest figure in it. It is certain that the vermin which Homer mentions would debase our poetry, but in the Greek that very word is noble and sonorous, *Kurogaiσέων*: but how is the objection concerning the dunghill to be answered? We must have recourse to the simplicity of manners amongst the antients, who thought nothing mean that was of use to life. Ithaca was a barren country, full of rocks and mountains, and owed its fertility chiefly to cultivation, and for this reason such circumstantial cares were necessary. It is true such a description is now more proper for a peasant than a king, but antiently it was no disgrace for a king to perform with his own hands, what is now left only to peasants. We read of a dictator taken from the plough, and why may not a king as well manure his field as plough it, without receding from his dignity? Virgil has put the same thing into a precept:

“ Ne saturare fimo pingui pudeat sola.”

v. 361. *In vain he strove, to crawl, and kiss his feet.*] It may seem that this circumstance was inserted casually, or at least only to shew the age and infirmity of Argus: but there is a further in-

Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes
 Salute his master, and confess his joys.
 Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul,
 Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole,
 Stole unperceiv'd; he turn'd his head and dry'd
 The drop humane: then thus impassion'd cry'd.

365

What noble beast in this abandon'd state
 Lies here all helpless at Ulysses' gate?

His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise;

370

If, as he seems, he was in better days,

Some care his age deserves: or was he priz'd

For worthless beauty! therefore now despis'd?

Such dogs, and men there are, meer things of state,

And always cherish'd by their friends, the great. 375

tent in it: if the dog had ran to Ulysses and fawned upon him, it would have raised a strong suspicion in Eumæus that he was not such a stranger to the Ithacans as he pretended, but some person in disguise; and this might have occasioned an unseasonable discovery. Eustathius.

v. 364. *Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul.*] I confess myself touched with the tenderness of these tears in Ulysses; I would willingly think that they proceed from a better principle than the weakness of human nature, and are an instance of a really virtuous, and compassionate disposition.

———— ἀγαθοὶ δ' ἀγιδάκρυες ἄνδρες.

“ Good men are easily moved to tears:” in my judgment Ulysses appears more amiable while he weeps over his faithful dog, than when he drives an army of enemies before him: that shews him to be a great hero, this a good man. It was undoubtedly an instance of an excellent disposition in one of the fathers who prayed for the “ grace of tears.”

“ ————— mollissima corda

“ Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,

“ Quæ lachrymas dedit; hæc nostri pars optima sensus.”

Juv. Sat. xv.

And Dryden,

Each gentle mind the soft infection felt,
 For richest metals are most apt to melt.

v. 374. *Such dogs, and men there are, meer things of state,
 And always cherish'd by their friends, the great.*]

Not Argus so, (Eumæus thus rejoin'd)
 But serv'd a master of a nobler kind,
 Who never, never shall behold him more!
 Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore!
 Oh had you seen him, vig'rous, bold and young, 380
 Swift as a stag, and as a lion strong;
 Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
 None 'scap'd him, bosom'd in the gloomy wood;
 His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
 To winde the vapour in the tainted dew! 385
 Such, when Ulysses left his natal coast;
 Now years un-nerve him, and his lord is lost!
 The women keep the gen'rous creature bare,
 A sleek and idle race is all their care:
 The master gone, the servants what restrains? 390
 Or dwells humanity where riot reigns?
 Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
 Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.

It is in the Greek *ἀνῆτες*, or "kings;" but the word is not to be taken in too strict a sense; it implies "all persons of distinction," or *οἰκοδεσπόται*, like the word *rex* in Horace.

"Regibus hic mos est ubi equos mercantur."

And *reginæ* in Terence (as Dacier observes) is used in the same manner.

"—— Eunuchum porrò dixti velle te:

"Quia solæ utuntur his reginæ."

v. 392. ———— *whatever day*

Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.]

This is a very remarkable sentence, and commonly found to be true. Longinus in his enquiry into the decay of human wit, quotes it. "Servitude, be it never so justly established, is a kind of
 "prison, wherein the soul shrinks in some measure, and diminishes by constraint: it has the same effect with the boxes in
 "which dwarfs are inclosed, which not only hinder the body from
 "its growth, but make it less by the constriction. It is observable
 "that all the great orators flourished in republics, and indeed
 "what is there that raises the souls of great men more than liberty? In other governments men commonly become instead
 "of orators, pompous flatterers: a man born in servitude may

This said, the honest herdsman strode before :
The musing monarch pauses at the door : 395

The dog whom fate had granted to behold
His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
Takes a last look, and having seen him, dies ;
So clos'd for ever faithful Argus' eyes !

And now Telemachus, the first of all, 400
Observ'd Eumæus ent'ring in the hall ;
Distant he saw, across the shady dome ;
Then gave a sign, and beckon'd him to come :
There stood an empty seat, where late was plac'd
In order due, the steward of the feast, 405

“ be capable of other sciences ; but no slave can ever be an orator ;
“ for while the mind is deprest and broken by slavery, it will ne-
“ ver dare to think or say any thing bold and noble ; all the vi-
“ gour evaporates, and it remains as it were confined in a prison.”
“ Etiam fera animalia, si clausa teneas, virtutis obliviscuntur.”
Tacit. Hist. lib. iv.

These verses are quoted in Plato, lib. vi. De Legibus, but some-
what differently from our editions.

Ἡμῖν γὰρ τε νόσ ἀπομείρεται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
Ἀνδρῶν ὡς ἂν δὴ, &c.

However this aphorism is to be understood only generally, not uni-
versally : Eumæus who utters it is an instance to the contrary,
who retains his virtue in a state of subjection ; and Plato speaks
to the same purpose, asserting that some slaves have been found of
such virtue as to be preferred to a son or brother ; and have often
preserved their masters and their families.

v. 399. *So clos'd for ever faithful Argus' eyes!*] It has been a
question what occasioned the death of Argus, at the instant he saw
Ulysses : Eustathius imputes it to the joy he felt at the sight of
his master. But there has another objection been started against
Homer, for ascribing so long a life as twenty years to Argus, and
that dogs never surpass the fifteenth year ; but this is an error ;
Aristotle affirms, that some dogs live two and twenty, and other
naturalists subscribe to his judgment. Eustathius tells us, that
other writers agree, that some dogs live twenty-four years. Pliny
thus writes, “ Canes Laconici vivunt annis-denīs, fœminæ duo-
“ denīs, cætera genera quindecim annos, aliquando viginti.”
Madam Dacier mentions some of her own knowledge that lived
twenty-three years ; and the translator, not to fall short of these
illustrious examples, has known one that died at twenty-two big
with puppies.

(Who now was busied carving round the board)
 Eumæus took, and plac'd it near his lord.
 Before him instant was the banquet spread,
 And the bright basket pil'd with loaves of bread.

Next came Ulysses, lowly at the door, 410
 A figure despicable, old, and poor,
 In squalid vests with many a gaping rent,
 Propt on a staff, and trembling as he went.
 Then, resting on the threshold of the gate,
 Against a cypress pillar lean'd his weight; 415
 (Smooth'd by the workman to a polish'd plain)
 The thoughtful son beheld, and call'd his swain:

These viands, and this bread, Eumæus! bear,
 And let yon' mendicant our plenty share:
 Then let him circle round the suitors board, 420
 And try the bounty of each gracious lord.
 Bold let him ask, encourag'd thus by me;
 How ill, alas! do want and shame agree?

v. 423. *How ill, alas! do want and shame agree?*] We are not to imagine that Homer is here recommending immodesty; but to understand him as speaking of a decent assurance, in opposition to a faulty shame or bashfulness. The verse in the Greek is remarkable.

Αἰδῶς δ' ἐν ἀγαθῇ κεχρημένῳ ἀνδρὶ προῖκτῃ.

A person of great learning has observed there is a tautology in the three last words; in “a beggar that wants:” as if the very notion of a beggar did not imply want. Indeed Plato, who cites this verse in his *Charmides*, uses another word instead of *προῖκτῃ*, and inserts *παρεῖναι*. Hesiod likewise, who makes use of the same line, instead of *προῖκτῃ* reads *κομίζει*, which would almost induce us to believe that they thought there was a tautology in Homer. It has therefore been conjectured, that the word *προῖκτῃς* should be inserted in the place of *προῖκτῃ*; I am sorry that the construction will not allow it; that word is of the masculine gender, and *ἀγαθῇ* which is of the feminine cannot agree with it. We may indeed substitute *ἀγαθός*, and then the sense will be “bashfulness “is no good petitioner for a beggar;” but this must be done without authority. We must therefore thus understand Homer; “Too much modesty is not good for a poor man, who lives by begging,”

His lord's command the faithful servant bears ;
The seeming beggar answers with his pray'rs. 425

Blest be Telemachus ! in ev'ry deed
Inspire him Jove ! in ev'ry wish succeed !

This said, the portion from his son convey'd
With smiles receiving on his scrip he lay'd.

Long as the minstrel swept the sounding wire, 430
He fed, and ceas'd when silence held the lyre.

Soon as the suitors from the banquet rose,
Minerva prompts the man of mighty woes

αγοῖν ; and this solution clears the verse from the tautology, for a man may be in want, and not be a beggar ; or (as Homer expresses it) *κεχρημένῳ*, and yet not *αγοῖν*.

v. 433. *Minerva prompts, &c.*] This is a circumstance that occurs almost in every book of the *Odyssey*, and Pallas has been thought to mean no more than the inherent wisdom of Ulysses, which guides all his actions upon all emergencies : it is not impossible but the poet might intend to inculcate, that the wisdom of man is the gift of heaven, and a blessing from the gods. But then is it not a derogation to Ulysses, to think nothing but what the goddess dictates ? and a restraint of human liberty, to act solely by the impulse of a deity ? Plutarch in his life of Coriolanus excellently solves this difficulty ; “ Men (observes that author) are
“ ready to censure and despise the poet, as if he destroyed the use
“ of reason, and the freedom of their choice, by continually
“ ascribing every suggestion of heart to the influence of a goddess :
“ whereas he introduces a deity not to take away the liberty of
“ the will, but as moving it to act with freedom ; the deity does
“ not work in us the inclinations, but only offers the object to
“ our minds, from whence we conceive the impulse, and form
“ our resolutions.” However these influences do not make the action involuntary, but only give a beginning to spontaneous operations ; for we must either remove God from all manner of causality, or confess that he invisibly assists us by a secret co-operation. For it is absurd to imagine that the help he lends us, consists in fashioning the postures of the body, or directing the corporeal motions : but in influencing our souls, and exciting the inward faculties into action by secret impulses from above ; or, on the contrary, by raising an aversion in the soul, to restrain us from action. It is true in ordinary affairs of life, in matters that are brought about by the ordinary way of reason, Homer ascribes the execution of them to human performance, and frequently represents his heroes calling a council in their own breasts, and acting according to the dictates of reason : but in actions unaccountably daring, of a transcendent nature, there they are said to be carried

To tempt their bounties with a suppliant's art,
 And learn the gen'rous from th' ignoble heart; 435
 (Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
 Dooms to full vengeance all th' offending train)
 With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintiff found,
 Humble he moves, imploring all around.

away by a divine impulse or enthusiasm, and it is no longer human reason, but a god that influences the soul.

I have already observed, that Homer makes use of machines sometimes merely for ornament; this place is an instance of it: here is no action of an uncommon nature performed, and yet Pallas directs Ulysses: Plutarch very justly observes, that whenever the heroes of Homer execute any prodigious exploit of valour, he continually introduces a deity, who assists in the performance of it; but it is also true, that to shew the dependance of man upon the assistance of heaven, he frequently ascribes the common dictates of wisdom to the goddesses of it. If we take the act here inspired by Minerva, as it lies nakedly in Homer, it is no more than a bare command to beg; an act, that needs not the wisdom of a goddess to command: but we are to understand it as a direction to Ulysses how to behave before the suitors upon his first appearance, how to carry on his disguise so artfully as to prevent all suspicions, and take his measures so effectually as to work his own re-establishment: in this light, the command becomes worthy of a goddess: the act of begging is only the method by which he carries on his design; the consequence of it is the main point in view, namely, the suitors destruction. The rest is only the stratagem, by which he obtains the victory.

v. 435. *And learn the gen'rous from th' ignoble heart;
 (Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
 Dooms to full vengeance all th' offending train).]*

A single virtue, or act of humanity, is not a sufficient atonement for a whole life of insolence and oppression; so that although some of the suitors should be found less guilty than the rest, yet they are still too guilty to deserve impunity.

v. 438. *With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintive sound,
 Humble he moves, &c.]*

Homer inserts this particularity to shew the complying nature of Ulysses in all fortunes; he is every where πολύτροπος, it is his distinguishing character in the first verse of the Odyssey, and it is visible in every part of it. He is an artist in the trade of begging, as Eustathius observes, and knows how to become the lowest, as well the highest station.

The proud feel pity, and relief bestow, 440
 With such an image touch'd of human woe;
 Enquiring all, their wonder they confess,
 And eye the man, majestic in distress.

While thus they gaze and question with their eyes,
 The bold Melanthius to their thought replies. 445
 My lords! this stranger of gigantic port
 The good Eumæus usher'd to your court.
 Full well I mark'd the features of his face,
 Tho' all unknown his clime, or noble race.

And is this present, swineherd! of thy hand? 450
 Bring'st thou these vagrants to infest the land?
 (Returns Antinous with retorted eye)
 Objects uncouth! to check the genial joy.
 Enough of these our court already grace,
 Of giant stomach, and of famish'd face. 455
 Such guests Eumæus to his country brings,
 To share our feast, and lead the life of kings.

To whom the hospitable swain rejoin'd:
 Thy passion, prince, belies thy knowing mind.
 Who calls, from distant nations to his own, 460
 The poor, distinguish'd by their wants alone?
 Round the wide world are sought those men divine
 Who public structures raise, or who design;

Homer adds, that the suitors were struck with wonder at the sight of Ulysses. That is (says Eustathius) because they never had before seen him in Ithaca, and concluded him to be a foreigner. But I rather think it is a compliment Homer pays to his hero to represent his port and figure to be such, as though a beggar, struck them with astonishment.

v. 462. *Round the wide world are sought those men divine, &c.*] This is an evidence of the great honour antiently paid to persons eminent in mechanic arts: the architect, and public artificers, *δημιουργοί*, are joined with the prophet, physician, and poet, who were esteemed almost with a religious veneration, and looked upon as public blessings. Honour was antiently given to men in proportion to the benefits they brought to society: a useless great man is a burthen to the earth, while the meanest artisan is beneficial to his fellow-creatures, and useful in his generation.

Those to whose eyes the gods their ways reveal,
Or blest with salutary arts to heal; 465

But chief to poets such respect belongs,
By rival nations courted for their songs;
These states invite and mighty kings admire,
Wide as the sun displays his vital fire.

It is not so with want! how few that feed 470
A wretch unhappy, merely for his need?
Unjust to me and all that serve the state,
To love Ulysses is to raise thy hate.

For me, suffice the approbation won
Of my great mistress, and her god-like son. 475

To him Telemachus. No more incense
The man by nature prone to insolence:
Injurious minds just answers but provoke —
Then turning to Antinous, thus he spoke.

Thanks to thy care! whose absolute command 480
Thus drives the stranger from our court and land.

Heav'n blest its owner with a better mind!
From envy free, to charity inclin'd.

This both Penelope and I afford:
Then, prince! be bounteous of Ulysses' board. 485

To give another's is thy hand so slow?
So much more sweet, to spoil, than to bestow?

Whence, great Telemachus! this lofty strain?
(Antinous cries with insolent disdain)

Portions like mine if ev'ry suitor gave, 490
Our walls this twelvemonth should not see the slave.

He spoke, and lifting high above the board
His pond'rous footstool, shook it at his lord.
The rest with equal hand conferr'd the bread;
He fill'd his scrip, and to the threshold sped; 495 }
But first before Antinous stopt, and said.

Bestow my friend! thou dost not seem the worst
Of all the Greeks, but prince-like and the first;

v. 497. *Bestow my friend! &c.*] Ulysses here acts with a prudent dissimulation; he pretends not to have understood the irony of

Then as in dignity, be first in worth,
 And I shall praise thee thro' the boundless earth. 500
 Once I enjoy'd in luxury of state
 Whate'er gives man the envy'd name of great;
 Wealth, servants, friends, were mine in better days;
 And hospitality was then my praise;
 In ev'ry sorrowing soul I pour'd delight, 505
 And poverty stood smiling in my sight.
 But Jove, all-governing, whose only will
 Determines fate, and mingles good with ill,
 Sent me (to punish my pursuit of gain)
 With roving pirates o'er th' Ægyptian main: 510
 By Ægypt's silver flood our ships we moor;
 Our spies commission'd straight the coast explore;
 But impotent of mind, with lawless will
 The country ravage, and the natives kill.
 The spreading clamour to their city flies, 515
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise:
 The red'ning dawn reveals the hostile fields
 Horrid with bristly spears, and gleaming shields:

Antinous, nor to have observed his preparation to strike him: and therefore proceeds as if he apprehended no danger. This at once shews the patience of Ulysses, who is inured to sufferings, and gives a foundation for the punishment of Antinous in the conclusion of the *Odyssey*.

It is observable, that Ulysses gives his own history in the same words as in the fourteenth book, yet varies from it in the conclusion; he there spoke to Eumæus, and Eumæus is here present, and hears the story: how is it then that he does not observe the falsification of Ulysses, and conclude him to be an impostor? Eustathius labours for an answer; he imagines that Eumæus was inadvertent, or had forgot the former relation, and yet asserts that the reason why Ulysses tells the same history in part to Antinous, proceeds from a fear of detection in Eumæus. I would rather imagine that Ulysses makes the deviation, trusting to the judgment of Eumæus, who might conclude that there was some good reason why he forbears to let Antinous into the full history of his life; especially, because he was an enemy both to Ulysses and Eumæus: he might therefore easily reflect, that the difference of his story arose from prudence and design, rather than from imposture and falsehood.

Jove thunder'd on their side : our guilty head
 We turn'd to flight ; the gath'ring vengeance spread }
 On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lay dead. 521 }
 Some few the foes in servitude detain ;
 Death ill exchang'd for bondage and for pain !
 Unhappy me a Cyprian took a-board,
 And gave to Dmetor, Cyprus' haughty lord : 525
 Hither, to 'scape his chains, my course I steer
 Still curst by fortune, and insulted here !

To whom Antinous thus his rage exprest.
 What god has plagu'd us with this gormand guest ?
 Unless at distance, wretch ! thou keep behind, 530 }
 Another isle, than Cyprus more unkind ; }
 Another Ægypt, shalt thou quickly find.
 From all thou beg'st, a bold audacious slave ;
 Nor all can give so much as thou canst crave.
 Nor wonder I, at such profusion shown ; 535
 Shameless they give, who give what's not their own.

The chief, retiring. Souls like that in thee,
 Ill suit such forms of grace and dignity.
 Nor will that hand to utmost need afford
 The smallest portion of a wasteful board, 540

v. 525. *And gave to Dmetor, Cyprus' haughty lord.*] We are not to search too exactly into historic truth among the fictions of poetry ; but it is very probable that this Dmetor was really king of Cyprus. Eustathius is of this opinion ; but it may be objected, that Cinyras was king of Cyprus in the time of Ulysses, Thus lib. xi. Iliad.

The beaming cuirass next adorn'd his breast ;
 The same which once king Cinyras possess'd ;
 The fame of Greece, and her assembled host,
 Had reach'd that monarch on the Cyprian coast.

The answer is, there were almost twenty years elapsed since the mention of this breast-plate of Cinyras ; this king therefore being dead, Dmetor possess'd the Cyprian throne.

v. 532. *Another Ægypt, &c.*] This passage is a full demonstration that the country was called Ægypt in the days of Homer, as well as the river Nilus ; for in the speech he uses Αἴγυπτος in the masculine gender to denote the river, and here he calls it πᾶρθε Αἴγυπτος in the feminine, to shew that he speaks of the country : the former word agreeing with πόταμος, the latter with γαῖα.

Whose luxury whole patrimonies sweeps,
Yet starving want, amidst the riot, weeps.

The haughty suitor with resentment burns,
And fow'rly smiling, this reply returns.

Take that, ere yet thou quit this princely throng :

And dumb for ever be thy slanderous tongue ! 546

He said, and high the whirling tripod flung.

His shoulder-blade receiv'd th' ungentle shock ;

He stood, and mov'd not, like a marble rock ;

But shook his thoughtful head, nor more complain'd,

Sedate of soul, his character sustain'd, 551

And inly form'd revenge : then back withdrew ;

Before his feet the well-fill'd scrip he threw,

And thus with semblance mild address the crew. 555

May what I speak your princely minds approve, 555

Ye peers and rivals in this noble love !

Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.

If, when the sword our country's quarrel draws,

v. 557. *Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.*] The reasoning of Ulysses in the original is not without some obscurity : for how can it be affirmed, that it is no great affliction to have our property invaded, and to be wounded in the defence of it ? The beggar who suffers for asking an alms, has no injury done him, except the violence offered to his person ; but it is a double injury, to suffer both in our persons and properties. We must therefore suppose that Ulysses means, that the importance of the cause, when our rights are invaded, is equal to the danger, and that we ought to suffer wounds, or even death, in defence of it ; and that a brave man grieves not at such laudable adventures. Or perhaps Ulysses speaks only with respect to Antinous, and means that it is a greater injury to offer violence to the poor and the stranger, than to persons of greater fortunes and station.

Eustathius gives a deeper meaning to the speech of Ulysses ; he applies it to his present condition, and it is the same as if he had said openly ; It would be no great matter if I had been wounded in defence of my palace, and other properties, but to suffer only for asking an alms, this is a deep affliction. So that Ulysses speaks in general, but intends his own particular condition ; and the import of the whole is, I grieve to suffer, not upon any weighty account, but only for being poor and hungry.

Or if defending what is justly dear,
 From Mars impartial some broad wound we bear;
 The gen'rous motive dignifies the scar. 561

But for mere want, how hard to suffer wrong?
 Want brings enough of other ills along!
 Yet if injustice never be secure,
 If fiends revenge, and gods assert the poor, 565
 Death shall lay low the proud aggressor's head,
 And make the dust Antinous' bridal bed.

Peace wretch! and eat thy bread without offence,
 (The suitor cry'd) or force shall drag thee hence,
 Scourge thro' the public street, and cast thee there, 570
 A mangled carcase for the hounds to tear.

His furious deed the gen'ral anger mov'd,
 All, ev'n the worst, condemn'd: and some reprov'd.
 Was ever chief for wars like these renown'd?
 Ill fits the stranger and the poor to wound. 575

Unblest thy hand! if in this low disguise
 Wander, perhaps, some inmate of the skies;
 They (curious oft' of mortal actions) deign
 In forms like these, to round the earth and main,
 Just and unjust recording in their mind, 580
 And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind.

Telemachus absorpt in thought severe,
 Nourish'd deep anguish, tho' he shed no tear;

v. 578. *They (curious oft' of mortal actions) &c.*] We have already observed, that it was the opinion of the antients, that the gods frequently assumed an human shape. Thus Ovid of Jupiter.

————— “ Summo delabor Olympo,
 “ Et Deus humanâ lustro sub imagine terras.”

I refer the reader to the objections of Plato, mentioned in the preceding book. It is observable, that Homer puts this remarkable truth into the mouth of the suitors, to shew that it was certain and undeniable, when it is attested even by such persons as had no piety or religion.

v. 582. *Telemachus* —————

Nourish'd deep anguish, tho' he shed no tear.]

This is spoken with particular judgment; Telemachus is here to

But the dark brow of silent sorrow shook :

While thus his mother to her virgins spoke. 588

“ On him and his may the bright god of day

“ That base, inhospitable blow repay !”

The nurse replies : “ If Jove receives my pray'r,

“ Not one survives to breathe to-morrow's air.”

All, all are foes, and mischief is their end ; 590

Antinous most to gloomy death a friend ;

(Replies the queen) the stranger begg'd their grace,

And melting pity soften'd ev'ry face ;

From ev'ry other hand redress he found,

But fell Antinous answer'd with a wound. 595

Amidst her maids thus spoke the prudent queen,

Then bid Eumæus call the pilgrim in.

Much of th' experienc'd man I long to hear,

If or his certain eye, or list'ning ear

Have learn'd the fortunes of my wand'ring lord ? 600

Thus she, and good Eumæus took the word.

A private audience if thy grace impart,

The stranger's words may ease the royal heart.

His sacred eloquence in balm distils,

And the sooth'd heart with secret pleasure fills. 605

Three days have spent their beams, three nights have run

Their silent journey, since his tale begun,

Unfinish'd yet ; and yet I thirst to hear !

As when some heav'n-taught poet charms the ear,

act the part of a wise man, not of a tender son ; he restrains his tears lest they should betray his father, it being improbable that he should weep for a vagabond and beggar. We find he has profited by the instructions of Ulysses, and practises the injunctions given in the former book.

—— If scorn insult my reverend age,

Bear it, my son ; repress thy rising rage.

If outrag'd, cease that outrage to repel,

Bear it my son, tho' thy brave heart rebel.

Telemachus struggles against the yearnings of nature, and shews himself to be a master of his passions ; he must therefore be thought to exert an act of wisdom, not of insensibility.

(Suspending sorrow with celestial strain 610
 Breath'd from the gods to soften human pain)
 Time steals away with unregarded wing,
 And the soul hears him, tho' he cease to sing.

Ulysses late he saw, on Cretan ground,
 (His father's guest) for Minos' birth renown'd. 615
 He now but waits the wind, to waft him o'er
 With boundless treasure, from Thesprotia's shore.

To this the queen. The wand'rer let me hear,
 While yon' luxurious race indulge their cheer,
 Devour the grazing ox and browsing goat, 620
 And turn my gen'rous vintage down their throat.
 For where's an arm, like thine Ulysses! strong,
 To curb wild riot and to punish wrong?

She spoke. Telemachus then sneez'd aloud;
 Constrain'd, his nostril echo'd thro' the crowd. 625

v. 615. ——— *for Minos' birth renown'd.*] Diodorus Siculus thus writes of Minos: "He was the son of Jupiter and Europa, who was fabled to be carried by a bull, (that is, in a ship called the bull, or that had the image of a bull carved upon its prow) into Crete: here Minos reigned, and built many cities: he established many laws among the Cretans; he also provided a navy, by which he subdued many of the adjacent islands. The expression in the Greek will bear a twofold sense; and implies either, where Minos was born, or where the descendants of Minos reign; for Idomenæus, who governed Crete in the days of Ulysses, was a descendant of Minos, from his son Deucalion."

Homer mentions it as an honour to Crete, to have given birth to so great a law-giver as Minos; and it is universally true, that every great man is an honour to his country: Athens did not give reputation to learned men, but learned men to Athens.

v. 624. ——— *Telemachus then sneez'd aloud.*] Eustathius fully explains the nature of this omen; for sneezing was reckoned ominous both by the Greeks and Romans. While Penelope uttered these words, Telemachus sneezes; Penelope accepts the omen, and expects the words to be verified. The original of the veneration paid to sneezing is this: The head is the most sacred part of the body, the seat of thought and reason: now the sneeze coming from the head, the ancients looked upon it as a sign or omen, and believed it to be sent by Jupiter; therefore they regarded it with a kind of adoration: the reader will have a full idea of the nature of the omen of sneezing here mentioned, from a singular instance in lib. iii.

The smiling queen the happy omen blest :

“ So may these impious fall, by fate oppress ! ”

Then to Eumæus : bring the stranger, fly !

And if my questions meet a true reply,

Grac'd with a decent robe he shall retire,

630

A gift in season which his wants require.

Thus spoke Penelope. Eumæus flies

In duteous haste, and to Ulysses cries.

The queen invites thee, venerable guest !

A secret instinct moves her troubled breast,

635

of Xenophon, in his expedition of Cyrus. Xenophon having ended a short speech to his soldiers with these words, viz. “ We have “ many reasons to hope for preservation ; ” they were scarce uttered, when a certain soldier sneezed : the whole army took the omen, and at once paid adoration to the gods ; then Xenophon resuming his discourse, proceeded, “ Since my fellow-soldiers, at the “ mention of our preservation, Jupiter has sent this omen,” &c. So that Xenophon fully explains Homer.

Sneezing was likewise reckoned ominous by the Romans. Thus Catullus,

“ Hoc ut dixit, amor sinistra ut ante

“ Dextram sternuit approbationem.”

Thus also Propertius,

“ Num tibi nascenti primis, mea vita, diebus

“ Aridus argutum sternuit omen amor.”

We find in all these instances that sneezing was constantly received as a good omen, or a sign of approbation from the gods. In these ages we pay an idle superstition to sneezing, but it is ever looked upon as a bad omen, and we cry “ God bless you,” upon hearing it, as the Greeks in later times said *ζῆνι* or *Ζεῦ σῶσον*. We are told this custom arose from a mortal distemper that affected the head, and threw the patient into convulsive sneezings, that occasioned his death.

I will only add from Eustathius, that Homer expresses the loudness of the sneezing, to give a reason why Penelope heard it, she being in an apartment at some distance from Telemachus.

The sneezing likewise gives us the reason why Penelope immediately commands Eumæus to introduce the beggar into her presence : the omen gave her hopes to hear of Ulysses ; she saw the beggar was a stranger, and a traveller, and therefore expected he might be able to give her some information.

Of her long absent lord from thee to gain
 Some light, and soothe her soul's eternal pain.
 If true, if faithful thou ; her grateful mind
 Of decent robes a present has design'd :
 So finding favour in the royal eye, 640
 Thy other wants her subjects shall supply.

Fair truth alone (the patient man reply'd)
 My words shall dictate, and my lips shall guide.
 To him, to me, one common lot was giv'n,
 In equal woes, alas ! involv'd by heav'n. 645

Much of his fates I know ; but check'd by fear
 I stand : the hand of violence is here :
 Here boundless wrongs the starry skies invade,
 And injur'd suppliants seek in vain for aid.
 Let for a space the pensive queen attend, 650
 Nor claim my story till the sun descend ;
 Then in such robes as suppliants may require,
 Compos'd and chearful by the genial fire,
 When loud uproar and lawless riot cease,
 Shall her pleas'd ear receive my words in peace. 655

Swift to the queen returns the gentle swain :
 And say, (she cries) does fear, or shame, detain
 The cautious stranger ? With the begging kind
 Shame suits but ill. Eumæus thus rejoin'd :

He only asks a more propitious hour, 660
 And shuns (who wou'd not ?) wicked men in pow'r ;
 At ev'ning mild (meet season to confer)
 By turns to question, and by turns to hear.

v. 644. *To him, to me, one common lot was giv'n,
 In equal woes, alas ! involv'd by heav'n.*]

These words bear a double sense ; one applicable to the speaker, the other to the reader : the reader, who knows this beggar to be Ulysses, is pleased with the concealed meaning, and hears with pleasure the beggar affirming that he is fully instructed in the misfortunes of Ulysses : but speaking in the character of a beggar, he keeps Eumæus in ignorance, who believes he is reciting the adventures of a friend, while he really gives his own history.

Whoe'er this guest (the prudent queen replies)
His ev'ry step and ev'ry thought is wise. 665
For men, like these, on earth he shall not find
In all the miscreant race of human kind.

Thus she. Eumæus all her words attends,
And parting, to the suitor pow'rs descends :
There seeks Telemachus, and thus apart 670
In whispers breathes the fondness of his heart.

The time, my lord, invites me to repair
Hence to the lodge ; my charge demands my care.
These sons of murder thirst thy life to take ;
O guard it, guard it, for thy servant's sake ! 675

Thanks to my friend, he cries ; but now the hour
Of night draws on, go seek the rural bow'r :
But first refresh : and at the dawn of day
Hither a victim to the gods convey.

Our life to heav'n's immortal pow'rs we trust, 680
Safe in their care, for heav'n protects the just.

Observant of his voice, Eumæus sat
And fed recumbent on a chair of state.
Then instant rose, and as he mov'd along
'Twas riot all amid the suitor-throng, 685 }
They feast, they dance, and raise the mirthful song.
'Till now declining tow'rd the close of day,
The sun obliquely shot his dewy ray.

v. 676. — *but now the hour of night draws on* —] The reader may look back to the beginning of the preceding book, for the explication of δειλὸν ἥμαρ, here mentioned by Homer.

This book does not fully comprehend the space of one day : it begins with the morning, and ends before night, so that the time here mentioned by the poet, is the evening of the thirty-ninth day.

Whence at this point (the prudent person might say)
His every step and every thought is watch'd;
For men, like this, on guard he'll not stand;
In all the intricate maze of human kind.
Thus the Romanus all her words attending
And paying, to the point of his delicate
There looks the physician, and thus spake he:
In what's his business the fondness of his heart
The time, my lord, invites me to repair
Hence to the lodge: my charge demands my care.
These last of mine I think I'll leave to fate
O guard it, guard it for the doctor's sake!
I have no more to say, the time is past;
Of night draw on, go look the land power
But still reflect, and at the dawn of day
Hither a victim to the guile convey.
Our life to heaven's immortal powers we trust
Safe in their care, for they protect the just
Observer of his wife, the honest man
And fed negligent on a chair of state.
Then instant note, and as he mov'd along
Twas all that said the doctor then.
They laugh, they dance, and take the mirthful song.
Till now holding forth the whole of day
The sun obliquely from the sky-ray.

v. 66. — but my wife has a right doctor — The reverend
may look back to the beginning of the piece, for the ex-
plication of these things, which are intended by the poet, is
This book does not fully comprehend the scope of one day, it
begins with the morning, and ends before night, so that the time
here mentioned by the poet, is the time of the day, and not
of the night, as some have thought. The poet has here
intended to show, that the doctor's wife is a very good
woman, and that she is very much beloved by her husband.
The poet has here intended to show, that the doctor's wife
is a very good woman, and that she is very much beloved
by her husband. The poet has here intended to show, that
the doctor's wife is a very good woman, and that she is
very much beloved by her husband. The poet has here
intended to show, that the doctor's wife is a very good
woman, and that she is very much beloved by her husband.

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK XVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The fight of Ulysses and Irus.

The beggar Irus insults Ulysses ; the suitors promote the quarrel, in which Irus is worsted, and miserably handled. Penelope descends, and receives the presents of the suitors. The dialogue of Ulysses with Eurymachus.

WHILE fix'd in thought the pensive hero sat,
A mendicant approach'd the royal gate ;
A furly vagrant of the giant kind,
The stain of manhood, of a coward mind :
From feast to feast, insatiate to devour
He flew, attendant on the genial hour.
Him on his mother's knees, when babe he lay,
She nam'd Arnæus on his natal day :

* Homer has been severely blamed for describing Ulysses, a king, entering the lists with a beggar : Rapin affirms, that he demeans himself by engaging with an unequal adversary. The objection would be unanswerable, if Ulysses appeared in his royal character : but it is as necessary in epic poetry, as on the theatre, to adapt the behaviour of every person to the character he is to represent, whether real or imaginary. Would it not have been ridiculous to have represented him, while he was disguised in the garb of a beggar, refusing the combat, because he knew himself to be a king ? and would not such a conduct have endangered a discovery ? Ought we not rather to look upon this episode as an instance of the greatness of the calamities of Ulysses, who is reduced to such uncommon extremities as to be set upon a level with the meanest of wretches ?

v. 8. *She nam'd Arnæus.*] It seems probable from this passage, that the mother gave the name to the child in the days of Homer ;

But Irus his associates call'd the boy,
 Practis'd, the common messenger to fly;
 Irus, a name expressive of th' employ.

10 }

From his own roof, with meditated blows,
 He strove to drive the man of mighty woes.

Hence dotard, hence ! and timely speed thy way,
 Lest dragg'd in vengeance thou repent thy stay ; 15
 See how with nods assent yon' princely train !
 But honouring age, in mercy I refrain ;

though perhaps not without the concurrence of the father : thus in the scriptures it is said of Leah, that " she bare a son and called " his name Reuben ; " and again, " she called his name Simeon ; " and the same is frequently repeated both of Leah and Rachel. In the age of Aristophanes, the giving a name to the child seems to have been a divided prerogative between the father and mother : for in his *Néφελαι* there is a dispute between Strepsiades and his wife, concerning the name of their son : the wife was of noble birth, and would therefore give him a noble name ; the husband was a plain villager, and was rather for a name that denoted frugality : but the woman not waving the least branch of her prerogative, they compromised the affair, by giving the child a compounded name that implied both frugality and chivalry, derived from *φείδω* to spare, and *ἵππος* an horse ; and the young cavalier's name was Phidippides. Eustathius affirms, that antiently the mother named the child ; and the scholiast upon Aristophanes in *avib.* quotes a fragment from Euripides to this purpose from a play called *Ægeus*.

Τὶ σὲ μάτερ ἐν δεκάτῃ τέκον ὠνόμασε.

" What was the name given on the tenth day by the mother to thee, the child ? " Dacier tells us, that the name of Arnæus was prophetic *ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρνῶν*, " from the sheep the glutton would devour when he came to manhood ; " but this is mere fancy, and it is no reason, because he proved a glutton, that therefore the name foretold it : one might rather think the fondness of the mother toward her infant, suggested a very different view : she gave the name according to her wishes, and flattered herself that he would prove a very rich man, " a man of many flocks and herds : " and therefore she called him *Ἀρναιῶς* : and this is the more probable, because all riches originally consisted in flocks and herds.

v. 11. *Irus a name expressive of th' employ.*] To understand this, we must have recourse to the derivation of the word Irus ; it comes from *εἶρω*, which signifies " nuncio ; " Irus was therefore so called, because he was a public messenger ; and Iris bears that name, as the messenger of the gods ; *Ἴρῶς*, ἀπαγγέλλων ; *Ἴρις*, Ἀγγελῶς. Hesychius.

In peace away ! left, if persuasions fail,
This arm with blows more eloquent prevail.

To whom, with stern regard : O insolence, 20
Indecently to rail without offence !

What bounty gives, without a rival share ;
I ask, what harms not thee, to breathe this air :
Alike on alms we both precarious live ;
And canst thou envy, when the great relieve ? 25

Know from the bounteous heav'ns all riches flow,
And what man gives, the gods by man bestow ;
Proud as thou art, henceforth no more be proud,
Lest I imprint my vengeance in thy blood ;
Old as I am, should once my fury burn, 30
How would'st thou fly, nor ev'n in thought return ?

Mere woman-glutton ! (thus the churl reply'd)
A tongue so flippant, with a throat so wide !
Why cease I, gods ! to dash those teeth away,
Like some vile boar's, that greedy of his prey 35
Uproots the bearded corn ? rise, try the fight,
Gird well thy loins, approach and feel my might :

v. 34. ——— *To dash those teeth away,
Like some wild boar's.]*

These words refer to a custom that prevailed in former ages ; it was allowed to strike out the teeth of any beast which the owner found in his grounds : Eustathius informs us, that this was a custom or law among the people of Cyprus ; but from what Homer here speaks, it seems to have been a general practice ; at least it was in use amongst the Ithacans.

v. 37. *Gird well thy loins.]* We may gather from hence the manner of the single combat ; the champions fought naked, and only made use of a cincture round the loins out of decency. Homer directly affirms it, when Ulysses prepares for the fight.

Then girding his strong loins, the king prepares
To close in combat, and his body bares ;
Broad spread his shoulders, and his nervous thighs
By just degrees like well turn'd columns rise ;
Ample his chest, his arms are round and long,
And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong.

Thus Diomed in the Iliad girds his friend Euryalus when he engages Epæus.

Sure of defeat, before the peers engage ;
Unequal fight ! when youth contends with age !

Thus in a wordy war their tongues display 40
More fierce intents, preluding to the fray ;
Antinous hears, and in a jovial vein,
Thus with loud laughter to the suitor-train.

This happy day in mirth, my friends employ,
And lo ! the gods conspire to crown our joy. 45

See ready for the fight, and hand to hand,
Yon' furly mendicants contentious stand ;
Why urge we not to blows ? Well pleas'd they spring
Swift from their seats, and thick'ning form a ring.

To whom Antinous. Lo ! enrich'd with blood, 50
A kid's well-fatted entrails (tasteful food)
On glowing embers lie ; on him bestow
The choicest portion who subdues his foe ;
Grant him unrival'd in these walls to stay,
The sole attendant on the genial day. 55

The lords applaud : Ulysses then with art,
And fears well-feign'd, disguis'd his dauntless heart :

Worn as I am with age, decay'd with woe ;
Say, is it baseness, to decline the foe ?
Hard conflict ! when calamity and age 60
With vig'rous youth, unknown to cares, engage !
Yet fearful of disgrace, to try the day
Imperious hunger bids, and I obey ;
But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
Swear to stand neutral, while we cope in fight. 65

Officious with the cincture girds him round.

The speeches here are short, and the periods remarkably concise, suitable to the nature of anger. The reader may consult the annotations on the xxth book, concerning the goat's entrails mentioned here by Antinous.

v. 64. *But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
Swear to stand neutral, while we cope in fight.*]

This is a very necessary precaution : Ulysses had reason to appre-

The peers assent : when straight his sacred head
Telemachus uprais'd, and sternly said.

Stranger, if prompted to chastise the wrong
Of this bold insolent ; confide, be strong !
Th' injurious Greek that dares attempt a blow, 70
That instant makes Telemachus his foe ;
And these my friends * shall guard the sacred ties
Of hospitality, for they are wise.

Then girding his strong loins, the king prepares
To close in combat, and his body bares ; 75
Broad spread his shoulders, and his nervous thighs
By just degrees, like well-turn'd columns, rise :
Ample his chest, his arms are round and long,
And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong,
(Attendant on her chief :) the suitor-crowd 80
With wonder gaze, and gazing speak aloud ;
Irus ! alas ! shall Irus be no more,
Black fate impends, and this th' avenging hour !

hend that the suitors would interest themselves in the cause of Irus, who was their daily attendant, rather than in that of a perfect stranger. Homer takes care to point out the prudence of Ulysses upon every emergence : besides, he raises this fray between two beggars into some dignity, by requiring the sanction of an oath to regulate the laws of the combat. It is the same solemnity used in the Iliad between Paris and Menelaus, and represents these combatants engaging with the formality of two heroes.

v. 72. *And these my friends shall guard the sacred ties
Of hospitality, for they are wise.]*

When Telemachus speaks these words, he is to be supposed to turn to Eurymachus and Antinous, to whom he directs his discourse. It must be allowed that this is an artful piece of flattery in Telemachus, and he makes use of it to engage these two princes, who were the chief of the suitors, on his side.

* Antinous and Eurymachus.

v. 82. *Irus, alas ! shall Irus be no more.]* This is literally translated : I confess I wish Homer had omitted these little collusions of words : he sports with Ἴρος ἄϊρος. It is a low conceit, alluding to the derivation of Irus, and means that he shall never more be a messenger. The translation, though it be verbal, yet is free from

Gods ! how his nerves a matchless strength proclaim :
Swell o'er his well-strung limbs, and brace his frame !

Then pale with fears, and sick'ning at the sight, 86
They dragg'd th' unwilling Irus to the fight ;
From his blank visage fled the coward blood,
And his flesh trembled as aghast he stood :

O that such baseness should disgrace the light ! 90
O hide it, death, in everlasting night !

(Exclaims Antinous) can a vig'rous foe
Meanly decline to combat age and woe ?
But hear me, wretch ! if recreant in the fray,
That huge bulk yield this ill-contested day ; 95
Instant thou sail'st, to Echetus resign'd ;
A tyrant, fiercest of the tyrant-kind,

ambiguity, and the joke concealed in αἶπος; this will be evident if we substitute another name in the place of Irus ; we may say Achilles shall be no longer Achilles, without descending from the gravity of epic poetry.

v. 90. *O that such baseness should disgrace the light !
O ! bide it, death, &c.]*

Eustathius gives us an instance of the deep penetration of some critics, in their comments upon these words ; they have found in them the philosophy of Pythagoras, and the transmigration of souls. The verse stands thus in Homer ;

Νῦν μὲν μὴτ' εἰς βυχάϊε, μὴτε γένοιο :

which they imagine is to be understood after this manner ; “ I wish thou hadst never been born ! and mayst thou never exist again, or have a second being !” To recite such an absurdity, is to refute it. The verse when literally rendered bears this import ; “ I wish thou wert now dead, or hadst never been born !” an imprecation very natural to persons in anger, who seldom give themselves time to speak with profound allusions to philosophy.

v. 96. *Instant thou sail'st, to Echetus resign'd ;
A tyrant, fiercest of the tyrant-kind.]*

The tradition concerning Echetus stands thus : he was king of Epirus, the son of Euchenor and Phlogea ; he had a daughter called Metopè, or as others affirm, Amphissa ; she being corrupted by Æchmodicus, Echetus put out her eyes, and condemned her to grind pieces of iron made in the resemblance of corn ; and told her she should recover her sight when she had ground the iron into flour.

Who casts thy mangled ears and nose a prey
To hungry dogs, and lops the man away.

While with indignant scorn he sternly spoke, 100
In ev'ry joint the trembling Irus shook ;

Now front to front each frowning champion stands,
And poises high in air his adverse hands.

The chief yet doubts, or to the shades below
To fell the giant at one vengeful blow, 105

Or save his life ; and soon his life to save
The king resolves, for mercy sways the brave.

That instant Irus his huge arm extends,
Full on the shoulder the rude weight descends ;

The sage Ulysses, fearful to disclose 110
The hero latent in the man of woes,

Check'd half his might ; yet rising to the stroke,
His jaw-bone dash'd ; the crashing jaw-bone broke :

Down dropp'd he stupid from the stunning wound ;
His feet extended, quiv'ring, beat the ground ; 115

His mouth and nostrils spout a purple flood ;

His teeth, all shatter'd, rush immix'd with blood.

The peers transported, as outstretch'd he lies,
With bursts of laughter rend the vaulted skies ;

Then dragg'd along, all bleeding from the wound,
His length of carcass trailing prints the ground ; 121

He invited Æchmodicus to an entertainment, and cut off the extremities from all parts of his body, and cast them to the dogs ; at length being seized with madness, he fed upon his own flesh, and died. This history is confirmed, lib. iv. of Apollonius,

Ἵδρις ἦς ἔχετος γλήναις ἐνὶ χάλκεα κέντρα
Πῆξε θυγατρὸς ἑῆς, σονόεντι δὲ κάρφεται ὅτῳ,
Ὀρφναίῃ ἐνὶ χαλκὸν ἀλετρεύεσα καλῇ.

I wonder how this last quotation escaped the diligence of Eustathius. Dacier affirms, that no mention is made of Echetus by any of the Greek historians, and therefore she has recourse to another tradition, preserved by Eustathius, who tells us, that Echetus was contemporary with Homer, that the poet had been ill used by him, and therefore took this revenge for his inhumanity.

Rais'd on his feet, again he reels, he falls,
 'Till propp'd, reclining on the palace walls;
 Then to his hand a staff the victor gave,
 And thus with just reproach address'd the slave. 125

There terrible, affright the dogs, and reign
 A dreaded tyrant o'er the bestial train!
 But mercy to the poor and stranger show,
 Lest heav'n in vengeance send some mightier woe.

Scornful he spoke, and o'er his shoulder flung 130
 The broad patch'd scrip; the scrip in tatters hung
 Ill join'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
 Then, turning short, disdain'd a further stay;
 But to the palace measur'd back the way.

There as he rested, gathering in a ring 135
 The peers with smiles address their unknown king:

Stranger, may Jove and all th' aerial pow'rs,
 With ev'ry blessing crown thy happy hours?
 Our freedom to thy prowess'd arm we owe
 From bold intrusion of thy coward foe; 140
 Instant the flying sail the slave shall wing
 To Echetus, the monster of a king.

While pleas'd he hears, Antinous bears the food,
 A kid's well fatted entrails, rich with blood:
 The bread from canisters of shining mold 145
 Amphinomus; and wines that laugh in gold:
 And oh! (he mildly cries) may heav'n display
 A beam of glory o'er thy future day!
 Alas, the brave too oft' is doom'd to bear
 The gripes of poverty, and stings of care. 150

v. 140. *From bold intrusion of thy coward foe.*] The word in the Greek is ἀναλτον. Γάστρα ἀναλτον is "a voracious appetite, a stomach that nothing can satisfy." Hesychius thus explains it: ἀναλτον ἀναυξες, τῷτ' ἐστὶν ἱκανόν, ἢ ἀπλήρωτον παρὰ τὴν ἄλσιν. But there is undoubtedly an error in Hesychius; instead of ἱκανόν we should read ἰσχνόν, that is "meager," or a "stomach that appears always unfilled." The general moral that we are to gather from the behaviour of Ulysses and Irus, is that insolence and boasting are signs of cowardice.

To whom with thought mature the king replies :
 The tongue speaks wisely, when the soul is wise ;
 Such was thy father ! in imperial state,
 Great without vice, that oft' attends the great :
 Nor from the fire art thou, the son, declin'd ; 155
 Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind !
 Of all that breathes, or grov'ling creeps on earth,
 Most vain is man ! calamitous by birth ;
 To-day with pow'r elate, in strength he blooms ;
 The haughty creature on that pow'r presumes : 160
 Anon from heav'n a sad reverse he feels ;
 Untaught to bear, 'gainst heav'n the wretch rebels.
 For man is changeful, as his bliss or woe ;
 Too high when prosp'rous, when distrest too low.

v. 156. *Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind !*] There never was a finer lecture of morality read in any of the schools of the philosophers, than this which Ulysses delivers to Amphinomus ; he utters it in with great solemnity, and speaks to all mankind in the person of Amphinomus. It is quoted by a variety of authors : Pliny in his preface to his Natural History, lib. 7. has wrote a dissertation on this sentence.

Of all that breathes, or grov'ling creeps on earth,
 Most vain is man, &c.

Aristotle and Maximus Tyrius quote it ; and Plutarch twice refers to it. Homer considers man both with respect to the errors of the mind, and the calamities incident to the body ; and upon a review of all mortal creatures, he attributes to man the unhappy superiority in miseries. But indeed Homer is so plain that he needs no interpretation, and any words but his own must disgrace him. Besides, this speech is beautiful in another view, and excellently sets forth the forgiving temper of Ulysses : he saw that all the sparks of virtue and humanity were not extinguished in Amphinomus ; he therefore warns him with great solemnity to forsake the suitors ; he implants conviction upon his mind, though ineffectually, and shews by it that when he falls by the hand of Ulysses in the succeeding parts of the Odyssey, his death is not a revenge but a punishment.

v. 163. *For man is changeful as his bliss or woe.*] Most of the interpreters have greatly misrepresented these words,

Τοῖος γὰρ νόος ἐστὶν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
 ὅσον ἐπ' ἡμᾶς ἄγνοε.

There was a day, when with the scornful great 165
 I swell'd in pomp and arrogance of state;
 Proud of the pow'r that to high birth belongs;
 And us'd that pow'r to justify my wrongs.
 Then let not man be proud: but firm of mind,
 Bear the best humbly, and the worst resign'd; 170
 Be dumb when heav'n afflicts! unlike yon' train
 Of haughty spoilers, insolently vain;
 Who make their queen and all her wealth a prey:
 But vengeance and Ulysses wing their way.
 O may'st thou, favour'd by some guardian pow'r, 175
 Far, far be distant in that deathful hour!
 For sure I am, if stern Ulysses breathe,
 These lawless riots end in blood and death.

Then to the gods the rosy juice he pours,
 And the drain'd goblet to the chief restores. 180
 Stung to the soul, o'ercastr with holy dread,
 He shook the graceful honours of his head;
 His boding mind the future woe forestalls:
 In vain! by great Telemachus he falls,
 For Pallas seals his doom: all sad he turns 185
 To join the peers; resumes his throne, and mourns.

They thus translate it, "*talis mens hominum, qualem deus fug-
 gerit;*" or, "*Such is the mind of man, as heav'n inspires:*"
 but this is an error, for *οἷον* cannot refer to *νόος*, but to *ἡμεας*, and
 the sentence is thus to be rendered, "*Talis mens hominum, qua-
 lem diem deus inducit;*" that is, "*The mind of man changes
 with the complexion of the day, as heav'n sends happiness or
 misery;*" or as in the translation,

For man is changeful, as his bliss or woe;
 Too high when prosp'rous, when distress'd too low.

The reader will be convinced that the construction requires this
 sense, by joining the preposition with the verb, *ἐπὶ* with *ἀγνοεῖ*,
 and rendering it, *οἷον ἡμεας ἐπ' ἀγνοεῖ*; nothing being more frequent
 than such a division of the preposition from the verb amongst the
 Greeks. It must be allowed, that Homer gives a very unhappy,
 yet too just a picture, of human nature: man is too apt to be proud
 and insolent in prosperity, and mean and abject in adversity; and
 those men who are most overbearing in an happy state, are always
 most base and mean in the day of affliction.

Meanwhile Minerva with instinctive fires
 Thy soul, Penelope, from heav'n inspires ;
 With flatt'ring hopes the suitors to betray,
 And seem to meet, yet fly, the bridal day ; 190
 Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's, to raise ;
 And crown the mother and the wife with praise.

v. 189. *With flatt'ring hopes the suitors to betray.*] The Greek is very concise, and the expression uncommon, ὅπως μετὰ σέβει θυμὸν παντὸς ἡρώων ; that is, Penelope thus acted that she might “ dilate the “ heart of the suitors ;” meaning (as Eustathius observes) that she might give them false hopes by appearing in their company ; for the heart shrinks, and is contracted by sorrow and despair, and is again dilated by hope or joy : this is I believe literally true, the spirits flow briskly when we are in joy, and a new pulse is given to the blood, which necessarily must dilate the heart : on the contrary, when we are in sorrow the spirits are languid, and the blood moves less actively ; and therefore the heart shrinks and contracts, the blood wanting vigour to dilate and expand it.

v. 191. *Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's, to raise.*] This is solely the act of Minerva, for Penelope is ignorant that she is to appear before her husband. This interview is excellently managed by Homer : Ulysses is to be convinced of his wife's fidelity ; to bring this about, he introduces her upon the public stage, where her husband stands as a common unconcerned spectator, and hears her express her love for him in the warmest terms ; here is no room for art or design, because she is ignorant that she speaks before Ulysses ; and therefore her words must be supposed to proceed from the heart. This gives us a reason why Homer makes her dwell at large upon her passion for Ulysses, and paint it in the strongest colours, viz. to evidence her chastity, and urge Ulysses to hasten the destruction of the suitors, by convincing him that she is able no longer to elude the marriage hour. But then it may be objected, if Penelope's sole design was to give a false hope to the suitors, does she not take a very wrong method, by speaking so very tenderly of Ulysses ? is not this a more probable reason for despair, than hope ? It is true, it would have been so, if in the conclusion of her speech she had not artfully added,

But when my son grows man, the royal sway
 Resign, and happy be thy bridal day !

So that Telemachus being now grown up to maturity, the suitors concluded that the nuptial hour was at hand. If then we consider the whole conduct of Penelope in this book, it must be allowed to be very refined and artful ; she observes a due regard towards Ulysses, by shewing she is not to be persuaded to marry ; and yet by the same words she gives the suitors hopes that the day is almost come when she intends to celebrate her nuptials ; she manages so dex-

Then, while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
Thus with a transient smile the matron cries,

Eurynomè! to go where riot reigns 195
I feel an impulse, tho' my soul disdains;
To my lov'd son the snares of death to show,
And in the traitor-friend unmask the foe;
Who smooth of tongue, in purpose insincere,
Hides fraud in smiles, while death is ambush'd there.

Go warn thy son, nor be the warning vain, 201
(Reply'd the sagest of the royal train)
But bath'd, anointed, and adorn'd descend;
Pow'rful of charms, bid ev'ry grace attend;
The tide of flowing tears a-while suppress; 205
Tears but indulge the sorrow, not repress.
Some joy remains: to thee a son is giv'n,
Such as in fondness parents ask of heav'n.

troussly, as to persuade without a promise; and for this reason the words are put into the mouth of Ulysses, and it is Ulysses who gives the hopes, rather than Penelope.

v. 193. *Then, while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
Thus with a transient smile the matron cries.*]

Homer gives us a very beautiful and just image in these words. In the Iliad he used a similar expression concerning Andromache, δακρυόεν γελάσασα; "a smile chaffis'd with tears." Ἀχρεῖον δ' ἐγέλασσε here bears the same import.

v. 207. ————— to thee a son is giv'n,
Such as in fondness parents ask of heav'n.]

I am not certain that this is the exact sense of Homer; Dacier understands him very differently. Eurynomè (observes that author) is not endeavouring to comfort Penelope because her son is now come to years of maturity; her purpose is, to shew the necessity she has to have recourse to art, to assist her beauty: for (adds she) your son is grown a man; meaning that a lady who has a son twenty years old, must have lost her natural beauty, and has occasion to be obliged to art to give her an artificial one. This, I confess, is too true, but it seems a little too ludicrous for epic poetry; I have followed a different sense, that gives us a far nobler image; conformable to that verse of Horace.

"Quid voveat dulcî nutricula majus alumno,
"Quam sapere," &c.

This agrees with the tenour of Euryclea's speech, and is a foundation of great comfort to Penelope.

Ah me! forbear, returns the queen, forbear,
 Oh! talk not, talk not of vain beauty's care; 210
 No more I bathe, since he no longer sees
 Those charms, for whom alone I wish to please.
 The day that bore Ulysses from this coast,
 Blasted the little bloom these cheeks could boast.
 But instant bid Autonoë descend, 215
 Instant Hippodamè our steps attend;
 Ill suits it female virtue, to be seen
 Alone, indecent, in the walks of men.

Then while Eurynomè the mandate bears,
 From heav'n Minerva shoots with guardian cares; 220
 O'er all her senses, as the couch she prest,
 She pours a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest,
 With ev'ry beauty ev'ry feature arms,
 Bids her cheeks glow, and lights up all her charms,
 In her love-darting eyes awakes the fires, 225
 (Immortal gifts! to kindle soft desires)
 From limb to limb an air majestic sheds,
 And the pure iv'ry o'er her bosom spreads.
 Such Venus shines, when with a measur'd bound
 She smoothly gliding swims th' harmonious round, 230
 When with the graces in the dance she moves,
 And fires the gazing gods with ardent loves.

Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends,
 And to the queen the damsel-train descends:

v. 221. *O'er all her senses, as the couch she prest,
 She pours a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest.]*

This is an admirable stroke of art, to shew the determined resolution of Penelope, to forbear the endeavour of making her person agreeable in any eyes but those of Ulysses: a goddess is obliged to cast her into an involuntary repose, and to supply an adventitious grace while she sleeps.

v. 233. *Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends.]* We see Penelope is a woman of so much wisdom, as to be the favourite of Minerva. She acts in every point with the highest discretion, and is inconsolable for her husband; yet the poet forbears to let her into the secret that Ulysses is returned: this is undoubtedly an in-

Wak'd at their steps, her flowing eyes unclofe; 235
The tear she wipes, and thus renews her woes.

Howe'er 'tis well; that sleep a-while can free
With soft forgetfulness, a wretch like me;
Oh! were it giv'n to yield this transient breath,
Send, oh! Diana, send the sleep of death! 240

Why must I waste a tedious life in tears,
Nor bury in the silent grave my cares?
O my Ulysses! ever honour'd name!
For thee I mourn, 'till death dissolves my frame.

Thus wailing, slow and sadly she descends, 245
On either hand a damsel-train attends:
Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
Radiant before the gazing peers she stands;
A vail translucent o'er her brow display'd,
Her beauty seems, and only seems, to shade: 250
Sudden she lightens in their dazled eyes,
And sudden flames in ev'ry bosom rise;
They send their eager souls with ev'ry look,
'Till silence thus th' imperial matron broke:

O why! my son, why now no more appears 255
That warmth of soul that urg'd thy younger years?
Thy riper days no growing worth impart,
A man in stature, still a boy in heart!
Thy well-knit frame unprofitably strong,
Speaks thee an hero from an hero sprung: 260
But the just gods in vain those gifts bestow,
O wise alone in form, and brave in show!
Heav'ns! could a stranger feel oppression's hand
Beneath thy roof, and could'st thou tamely stand?

tended satyr, and Homer means, that a woman in every point discreet, is still to be suspected of loquacity: this seems to have been the real sentiment of Homer, which he more fully declares in the eleventh Odyssy.

When earnest to explore thy secret breast,
Unfold some trifle, but conceal the rest;
For since of woman-kind so few are just,
Think all are false, nor ev'n the faithful trust.

If thou the stranger's righteous cause decline, 265
His is the suff'rance, but the shame is thine.

To whom with filial awe, the prince returns :
That gen'rous soul with just resentment burns,
Yet taught by time, my heart has learn'd to glow,
For others good, and melt at others woe : 270
But impotent these riots to repel,
I bear their outrage, tho' my soul rebel :
Helpless amid the snares of death I tread,
And numbers leagu'd in impious union dread :
But now no crime is theirs : this wrong proceeds 275
From Irus, and the guilty Irus bleeds.

O would to Jove ! or her whose arms display
The shield of Jove, or him who rules the day !
That yon' proud suitors, who licentious tread
These courts, within these courts like Irus bled : 280
Whose loose head tott'ring, as with wine oppress'd,
Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breast ;
Pow'rless to move, his stagg'ring feet deny
The coward wretch the privilege to fly.

Then to the queen Eurymachus replies ; 285
O justly lov'd, and not more fair than wise !
Should Greece thro' all her hundred states survey
Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway,

v. 275. ——— *this wrong proceeds
From Irus, and the guilty Irus bleeds.*]

Eustathius informs us, that we are here to understand the fray between Irus and Ulysses. Penelope refers to the violence intended to be offered to Ulysses, when the footstool was thrown at him by Antinous ; we find that she was acquainted with that assault from her speech in the preceding book. In reality, the queen was ignorant of the combat between Irus and Ulysses ; but Telemachus misunderstands her with design, and makes an apology for the suitors, fearing to raise a further disorder, or provoke them to some more violent act of resentment.

v. 288. ——— *all Greece would own thy sway, &c.*] Homer expresses Greece by Ἰᾶσεν Ἀργος, Iasian Argos. The word properly (as Eustathius observes) denotes the Morea or Peloponnesus, so

In rival crouds contest the glorious prize,
 Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes : 290
 O woman ! loveliest of the lovely kind,
 In body perfect, and compleat in mind !

Ah me ! returns the queen, when from this shore
 Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more !
 The gods decreed these eyes no more should keep 295
 Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep.
 Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove,
 My virtues last ; my brightest charm is love.
 Now, grief, thou all art mine ! the gods o'ercast
 My soul with woes, that long, ah long must last ! 300
 Too faithfully my heart retains the day
 That sadly tore my royal lord away :
 He grasp'd my hand, and oh my spouse ! I leave
 Thy arms, (he cry'd) perhaps to find a grave :
 Fame speaks the Trojans bold ; they boast the skill 305
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill,
 To dart the spear, and guide the rushing car
 With dreadful inroad thro' the walks of war.
 My sentence is gone forth, and 'tis decreed
 Perhaps by righteous heav'n that I must bleed ! 310

called from Iäsus the son of Argus, and Io king of that country ; Strabo agrees with Eustathius. Chapman wonderfully mistakes Homer, and explains his own mistake in a paraphrase of six lines.

Most wise Icarius' daughter, if all those
 That did for Colchos vent'rous sail dispose,
 For that rich purchase ; had before but seen
 Earth's richer prize, in th' Ithacensian queen,
 They had not made that voyage ; but to you
 Would all their virtues, all their beings vow.

I need not say how foreign this is to the original. In reality Argos with different epithets, signifies different countries ; 'Αχαϊκὸν Ἄργος means Thessaly, and Ἰάσον Ἄργος Peloponnesus ; but here it denotes Greece universally ; for it would appear absurd to tell Penelope, that all the Morea would admire her beauty, this would lessen the compliment ; nor is any reason to be assigned why Peloponnesus should admire her more than the rest of the Greeks.

My father, mother, all, I trust to thee;
 To them, to them transfer the love of me:
 But when my son grows man, the royal sway
 Resign, and happy be thy bridal day!
 Such were his words; and Hymen now prepares 315
 To light his torch, and give me up to cares;
 Th' afflictive hand of wrathful Jove to bear:
 A wretch the most compleat that breathes the air!
 Fall'n ev'n below the rights to woman due!
 Careless to please, with insolence ye woo! 320
 The gen'rous lovers, studious to succeed,
 Bid their whole herds and flocks in banquets bleed;

v. 313. *But when my son grows man, the royal sway
 Resign, and happy be thy bridal day.]*

The original says, "resign the palace to Telemachus:" this is spoken according to the customs of antiquity: the wife, upon her second marriage, being obliged to resign the house to the heir of the family. This circumstance is inserted with great judgment: the suitors were determined to seize it upon marriage with Penelope, as appears from the second *Odyssey*.

What mighty labours would he then create,
 To seize his treasures, and divide his state,
 The royal palace to the queen convey,
 Or him she blesses in the bridal day?

Penelope therefore by this declaration gives the suitors to understand, that the palace belonged not to her, but Telemachus. This assertion has a double effect; it is intended to make the suitors less warm in their addresses; or if they persist, to set the injustice done to Telemachus in open view. The beauty of all the speeches of Penelope in this book is so obvious that it needs no explanation; Homer gives her a very amiable character, she is good in every relation of life, merciful to the poor and stranger, a tender mother, and an affectionate wife; every period is almost a lecture of morality.

My father, mother, all, I trust to thee;
 To them, to them transfer the love of me.

This shews the duty of the child to the parent; it may be extended to all persons to whom we owe any duty; and humanity requires that we should endeavour to ease the burthen of our friends in proportion to their calamities; we should at all times consult their happiness, but chiefly in the hour of adversity. A friend should be a support to lean upon in all our infirmities.

By precious gifts the vow sincere display :

You, only you, make her ye love your prey.

Well-pleas'd Ulysses hears his queen deceive 325

The suitor-train, and raise a thirst to give :

v. 323. *By precious gifts the vow sincere display :*

You, on'y you, make her ye love your prey.]

Horace, lib. ii. Sat. 5. makes a very severe reflection upon Penelope, and in her person (I say not how justly) upon the whole sex; he gives the avarice of the suitors as the sole reason of Penelope's chastity; and insinuates that women would sell their virtue, if men would be at the expence to buy.

“ Venit enim magnum donandi parca Juventus,

“ Nec tantum Veneris, quantum studiosa culinæ.

“ Sic tibi Penelope frugi est : quæ si semel uno

“ De sene gustârit, tecum partita lucellum ;

“ Ut canis, a corio nunquam absterrebitur uncto.”

Horace had this passage in view, and imputes the coldness of Penelope to a want of generosity in her admirers. Diodorus assures us, that Venus had a temple in Ægypt dedicated to her under the title of χρυσή Ἀφροδίτη : or “ golden Venus ;” and it is her usual epithet throughout all Homer. Near Memphis there was an allotment of ground called “ the field of golden Venus :” but it ought not to be concealed, that some persons believe she bears that name from the golden colour of her hair. Horace, to give his satyr the greater strength, puts the words into the mouth of the prophet Tiresias, a person of unerring veracity.

v. 325. *Well-pleas'd Ulysses hears his queen deceive*

The suitor-train, and raise a thirst to give.]

This conduct may appear somewhat extraordinary both in Penelope and Ulysses; she not only takes, but asks presents from persons whom she never intends to marry: is not this a sign either of avarice or falsehood? and is not Ulysses equally guilty, who rejoices at it? But in reality, Penelope is no way faulty; she deceives the suitors with hopes of marriage by accepting these presents, but it is for this sole reason that she accepts them; she intends to give them false hopes, and by that method to defer the nuptial hour: it is not injustice, but an equitable reprisal; they had violently wasted her treasures, and she artfully recovers part of them by a piece of refined management. Dacier defends her after another method: she believes that Penelope thus acts, not out of interest but honour; it was a disgrace to so great a princess to have so many admirers, and never to receive from their hands such presents as custom not only allows, but commands; neither is Ulysses blameable, who rejoices at his wife's policy. He understood her intent, and being artful himself, smiles to see her artfulness.

False hopes she kindles, but those hopes betray,
And promise, yet elude the bridal day.

While yet she speaks, the gay Antinous cries,
Offspring of kings, and more than woman-wise! 330
'Tis right; 'tis man's prerogative to give,
And custom bids thee without shame receive;
Yet never, never, from thy dome we move,
'Till Hymen lights the torch of spousal love.

The peers dispatch their heralds to convey 335
The gifts of love; with speed they take the way.
A robe Antinous gives of shining dyes,
The varying hues in gay confusion rise
Rich from the artist's hand! twelve clasps of gold
Close to the lacing wait the vest infold; 340
Down from the swelling loins, the vest unbound
Floats in bright waves redundant o'er the ground.

Plutarch in his Treatise of reading poems, vindicates Ulysses very much in the same way: if (says that author) Ulysses rejoiced at Penelope's art in drawing presents from the suitors out of avarice, he discovers himself to be a sordid prostitute of his wife; but if through a wise foresight he hoped by her acceptance of the presents, to get the suitors more into his power, by lulling them into security, and laying all their suspicions asleep, through a sudden prospect of marriage; if this occasioned his joy, this joy arising from her artful management, and from a full confidence in his wife, is no ways blameable, but proceeds from a sufficient and laudable cause. In short, the suitors were enemies, and nothing could be practised dishonourably against them, that either Ulysses or Penelope could act consistently with their own honour.

v. 327. *False hopes she kindles.*] It is certain that the words in the Greek will bear a double construction, and *δέλγε θυμὸν μελαχιόη ἐπέεσσιν* may refer either to Penelope or Ulysses. Eustathius thinks they are spoken of Ulysses; then the meaning is, that Ulysses comforted himself with her amusing words, while he formed a design very different from what her words expressed; but Dacier refers them to Penelope, perhaps with better reason: *δέλγε* depends upon *φάτο* in the preceding line; and by thus understanding it, the construction becomes easy and natural: and the sentence means, that Penelope's words flattered the suitors into hopes of marriage, while her thoughts were very distant from complying with their inclinations: this interpretation best agrees with the general design of Penelope, which was to act an artful part, and neither comply, nor absolutely refuse their addresses.

A bracelet rich with gold, with amber gay,
 That shot effulgence like the solar ray,
 Eurymachus presents : and ear-rings bright, 345
 With triple stars, that cast a trembling light.
 Pisander bears a necklace wrought with art ;
 And ev'ry peer, expressive of his heart,
 A gift bestows : this done, the queen ascends,
 And slow behind her damsel-train attends. 350

Then to the dance they form the vocal strain,
 'Till Hesperus leads forth the starry train ;
 And now he raises, as the day-light fades,
 His golden circlet in the deep'ning shades :
 Three vases heap'd with copious fires display 355
 O'er all the palace a fictitious day ;
 From space to space the torch wide-beaming burns,
 And sprightly damsels trim the rays by turns.

To whom the king : Ill suits your sex to stay
 Alone with men ! ye modest maids, away ! 360

v. 355. *Three vases heap'd with copious fires display
 O'er all the palace a fictitious day.]*

The word in the Greek is λαμπτήρ, or a vase which was placed upon a tripod, upon which the antients burnt dry and oftentimes odoriferous wood, to give at once both perfume and light. Eustathius explains it by χυτρόπαις, or a vessel raised on feet in the nature of an hearth. Hesychius explains λαμπτήρ, an hearth placed in the middle of the house or hall, on which they burnt dry wood with intermingled torches to enlighten it. It is strange that there is no mention of lamps, but only torches, in Homer ; undoubtedly lamps were not yet in use in Greece, although much earlier found out by the Hebrews : thus Exod. xxv. 6. oil is mentioned, and enjoined to be used in giving light to the sanctuary.

v. 359. ——— ——— *Ill suits your sex to stay
 Alone with men ! ye modest maids, away !]*

Homer is perpetually giving us lessons of decency and morality. It may be thought that this interlude between Ulysses and the damsels of Penelope is foreign to the action of the *Odyssey* ; but in reality it is far from it : the poet undertook to describe the disorders which the absence of a prince occasions in his family ; this passage is an instance of it ; and Homer with good judgment makes these wantons declare their contempt of Ulysses, and their favour to their suitors, that we may acknowledge the justice of their punishment in the subsequent parts of the *Odyssey*.

Go, with the queen the spindle guide; or cull
 (The partners of her cares) the silver wool;
 Be it my task the torches to supply,
 Ev'n 'till the morning lamp adorns the sky;
 Ev'n 'till the morning, with unwearied care, 365
 Sleepless I watch; for I have learn'd to bear.

Scornful they heard: Melantho, fair and young,
 (Melantho, from the loins of Dolius sprung,
 Who with the queen her years an infant led,
 With the soft fondness of a daughter bred) 370
 Chiefly derides: regardless of the cares
 Her queen endures, polluted joys she shares
 Nocturnal with Eurymachus! With eyes
 That speak disdain, the wanton thus replies.

Oh! whither wanders thy distemper'd brain, 375
 Thou bold intruder on a princely train?
 Hence to the vagrant's rendezvous repair;
 Or shun in some black forge the midnight air.

v. 377. *Hence to the vagrant's rendezvous repair;
 Or shun in some black forge the midnight air.]*

I flatter myself that I have given the true sense of χαλκήϊος δόμος, and λέσχη: in Greece the beggars in winter retired by night to public forges for their warmth, or to some rendezvous where they entertained themselves as it were in a common assembly. Eustathius explains λέσχη to be “a public place without any doors, “where beggars were used to lodge.” Hesychius gives us several interpretations of the word, that it signifies an assembly, a conversation; it implies also public stoves or baths; and Eustathius informs us from Aristophanes, that beggars used to take up their lodgings in the public baths, as well as in these places mentioned by Homer; χαλκήϊος δόμος is an office of men that work in brass. He further observes that these two places are used after the same manner in Hesiod.

Πὰρ δ' ἔθι χαλκείον θῶκον, καὶ ἐπ' ἀλέα λέσχην
 ὥρη χειμερινή, ὅπότε κρύει ἄνερας εἶργον
 ἰσχύει. ———

It may not be improper to observe, that πὰρ δ' ἔθι θῶκον χαλκείον is very ill translated by “Accede Æneam sedem,” in the Latin version; it should be “fuge officinam ærariam.”

Proceeds this boldness from a turn of soul,
 Or flows licentious from the copious bowl? 380
 Is it that vanquish'd Irus swells thy mind?
 A foe may meet thee of a braver kind,
 Who, short'ning with a storm of blows thy stay,
 Shall send thee howling all in blood away!

To whom with frowns: O impudent in wrong! 385
 Thy lord shall curb that insolence of tongue;
 Know to Telemachus I tell th' offence:
 The scourge, the scourge shall lash thee into sense.

With conscious shame they hear the stern rebuke,
 Nor longer durst sustain the sov'reign look. 390

Then to the servile task the monarch turns
 His royal hands: each torch refulgent burns
 With added day: meanwhile in musel mood,
 Absorpt in thought, on vengeance fix'd he stood.
 And now the martial maid, by deeper wrongs 395
 To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors tongues,

v. 381. *Is it that vanquish'd Irus swells thy mind?*] The word in Homer is ἀλύς, which is used in various places; sometimes (observes Plutarch in his Treatise upon reading poems) it signifies “being disquieted in mind,”

Ὡς ἔφατ' ἢ ἀλύς' ἀπεβήσατο, τείρετο δ' αἰνῶς.

In other places it implies “an insolent joy, or boasting;” and then he quotes this verse,

Ἡ ἀλύς ἔτι Ἴρον ἐνικήσας.

v. 395. *And now the martial maid, by deeper wrongs,
 To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors tongues.*]

It may be thought very unjustifiable in Homer, to introduce Minerva exciting the suitors to violence. Dacier defends the poet, by shewing that the sentiment is conformable to true theology: and the all-wise Author of our being is pleased sometimes to harden the hearts of the wicked, (or rather to permit them to harden their own hearts) that they may fill up the measure of their crimes, and be ripe for judgment: yet we are not to imagine, that any person is necessitated to be wicked: it is not the hardening the heart that originally makes men impious, but they are first impious, and then they are delivered over to an hardness of heart.

Scornful of age, to taunt the virtuous man :
Thoughtless and gay, Eurymachus began.

Hear me (he cries) confederates and friends !
Some god no doubt this stranger kindly sends ; 400
The shining baldness of his head survey,
It aids our torch-light, and reflects the ray.—

Then to the king that levell'd haughty Troy.—
Say, if large hire can tempt thee to employ

But Homer may be justified another way ; and Minerva may be understood to act thus in favour of Ulysses : the goddess of wisdom infatuates the suitors to insult that hero, and hasten their own destruction.

v. 400. *Some god, no doubt, this stranger kindly sends.*] Aristotle affirms that Homer is the father of poetry ; not only of the epic, but also of the dramatic ; that he taught how to write tragedy in the Iliad, and comedy by several short sketches in the Odyssey. Eustathius here remarks, that he likewise gave a model for satyr, of which the Cyclops of Euripides still extant is an example ; (which is a satyric poem founded upon the story of Polypheme in Homer.) I confess my eye is not sharp enough to see the dignity of these railleries ; and it may be thought that Homer is the father of another kind of poetry, I mean the farce, and that these low conceits are no way to be justified, but by being put into the mouths of the suitors, persons of no dignity or character. Longinus brings such descriptions of the suitors, as instances of the decay of Homer's genius. When that declines (observes that author) poets commonly please themselves with painting manners ; such is Homer's description of the lives led by the suitors in the palace of Ulysses : for in reality all that description is a kind of comedy, wherein the different characters of men are painted.

v. 401. *The shining baldness of his head survey,
It aids our torch-light, and reflects the ray.]*

This in Dacier's judgment is a raillery purely satirical : it is drawn from the shining glass of an old man's bald head. But if this be purely satyirical, to be a satyr is to be a bad man : to rally natural infirmities is inhumanity : old age is venerable, and the bald head as well as the gray hair is an honour, and ought not to be the subject of raillery. I doubt not but Homer put it into the mouth of Eurymachus to make him more odious, and to shew us that the same man who invades his prince's property, insults the stranger, and outrages the poor ; pays no deference to old age, but is base enough to contemn what he ought to honour. Vice and folly are the province of satyr, not human infirmity.

Those hands in works; to tend the rural trade, 405
 To dress the walk, and form th' embow'ring shade?
 So food and raiment constant will I give:
 But idly thus thy soul prefers to live,
 And starve by strolling, not by work to thrive. }

To whom incens'd: Should we, O prince engage
 In rival tasks beneath the burning rage 411
 Of summer suns; were both constrain'd to wield,
 Foodless, the scythe along the burthen'd field;

v. 412. ——— *were both constrain'd to wield,
 Foodless, the scythe along the burthen'd field.*]

I doubt not but such employments as these, now only suitable to low life, will seem mean to many readers, and unworthy of the dignity of epic poetry: it is no defence to say that they are mentioned by a beggar, and therefore agreeable to his character: the words are addressed to a prince, and suppose that a skill in such works was not unusual to persons of eminent stations; otherwise the challenge of Ulysses is ridiculously absurd. Who could forbear laughing, if he should hear one of our beggars challenge a peer, to plough or mow with him all day without eating? The truth is, the greatest persons followed such employments without any diminution of their dignities; nay, a skill in such works as agriculture was a glory even to a king: Homer here places it upon a level with military science, and the knowledge of the cultivation of the ground is equalled to glory in war. In the preface to the Pastorals of Virgil, (but not written by Mr. Dryden) there is a passage that shews that the same simplicity of manners prevailed amongst the antient Latins, as amongst the antient Greeks: "It ought not (says that author) to surprise a modern writer, that kings laid down their first rudiments of government in tending their mute subjects, their herds and flocks: nor ought it to seem strange that the master of the horse to king Latinus in the ninth Æneid was found in the homely employment of cleaving blocks, when news of the first skirmish between the Trojans and Latins was brought to him." This passage fully vindicates Homer, and shews that such employments were no dishonour to the greatest persons; but there are two errors in the quotation; it is not taken from the ninth, but the seventh Æneid; nor is Tyrrheus, who cleaves the blocks, master of the horse to king Latinus, but the intendant of his flocks; or as Dryden translates it,

Tyrrheus, chief ranger to the Latian king.

" ——— Tyrrheusque pater, cui regia parent
 " Armenta, & latè custodia credita campi."

Or should we labour, while the ploughshare wounds,
With steers of equal strength, th' allotted grounds:
Beneath my labours, how thy wond'ring eyes 416
Might see the fable field at once arise!

Should Jove dire war unloose; with spear, and shield,
And nodding helm, I tread th' enfanguin'd field,
Fierce in the van: then wou'dst thou, wou'dst thou,—
say,— 420

Mis-name me, glutton, in that glorious day?
No, thy ill-judging thoughts the brave disgrace;
'Tis thou injurious art, not I am base.

Proud to seem brave among a coward-train!
But know, thou art not valorous, but vain. 425

Gods! should the stern Ulysses rise in might,
These gates would seem too narrow for thy flight.

While yet he speaks, Eurymachus replies,
With indignation flashing from his eyes.

Slave, I with justice might deserve the wrong, 430
Should I not punish that opprobrious tongue,
Irrev'rent to the great, and uncontrol'd,
Art thou from wine, or innate folly, bold?
Perhaps, these outrages from Irus flow,
A worthless triumph o'er a worthless foe! 435

He said, and with full force a footstool threw:
Whirl'd from his arm with erring rage it flew;

Tyrrheus is no otherwise a warriour, than as a deer under his charge, being killed, engages him in a quarrel, and he arms the rustics to encounter the Trojans who slew it.

“ ——— vocat agmina Tyrrheus
“ *Quadrifidam quercum cuneis ut forte coactis*
“ *Scindebat*” ———

Tyrrheus, the foster-father of the beast,
Then clench'd an hatchet in his horny fist;
But held his hand from the descending stroke,
And left his wedge within the cloven oak.

It is true, though Tyrrheus was not master of the horse to the king, yet his office was a post of dignity, otherwise it had been very easy for Virgil to have given him a more noble employment.

Ulysses, cautious of the vengeful foe,
 Stoops to the ground, and disappoints the blow.
 Not so a youth who deals the goblet round, 440
 Full on his shoulder it inflicts a wound,

Dash'd from his hand the sounding goblet flies,
 He shrieks, he reels, he falls, and breathless lies.

Then wild uproar and clamour mounts the sky,
 'Till mutual thus the peers indignant cry; 445

O had this stranger sunk to realms beneath,
 To the black realms of darkness and of death,
 Ere yet he trod these shores! to strife he draws
 Peer against peer; and what the weighty cause?
 A vagabond! for him the great destroy 450
 In vile ignoble jars, the feast of joy.

To whom the stern Telemachus arose!
 Gods! what wild folly from the goblet flows?
 Whence this unguarded openness of soul,
 But from the licence of the copious bowl? 455
 Or heav'n delusion sends: but hence, away!
 Force I forbear, and without force obey.

Silent, abash'd, they hear the stern rebuke,
 'Till thus Amphinomus the silence broke.

True are his words, and he whom truth offends 460
 Not with Telemachus, but truth contends;
 Let not the hand of violence invade
 The rev'rend stranger, or the spotless maid;

v. 457. *Force I forbear, and without force obey.*] This is very artful in Telemachus; he had spoken warmly in defence of Ulysses, and he apprehends lest he should have provoked the suitors too far; he therefore softens his expression, to avoid suspicions of a latent cause, why he interests himself so vigorously in vindication of a beggar, against the princes of the country. Besides, too obstinate an opposition might have provoked the suitors to have continued all night in the palace, which would have hindered Ulysses and Telemachus from concerting their measures to bring about their destruction: Telemachus therefore, to induce them to withdraw, uses menaces, but menaces approaching to persuasion; if he had used violence, matters must immediately have come to extremities.

Retire we hence! but crown with rosy wine
 The flowing goblet to the pow'rs divine; 465
 Guard he his guest beneath whose roof he stands;
 This justice, this the social right demands.

The peers assent; the goblet Mulius crown'd
 With purple juice, and bore in order round;
 Each peer successive his libation pours 470
 To the blest gods that fill th' aerial bow'rs;
 Then swill'd with wine, with noise the crouds obey,
 And rushing forth tumultuous, reel away.

v. 470. *Each peer successive his libation pours
 To the blest gods ————]*

We have already observed that libations were made to the gods before and after meals; here we see the suitors offer their libation before they retire to repose. We are not to ascribe this religious act to the piety of these debauchees, but to the customs of the times; they practise not true religion, but only the exteriors of it; they are not pious, but fashionable.

The action of this book is comprehended in a very short duration of time; it begins towards the close of the day, and ends at the time when the suitors withdraw to repose; this is the evening and part of the thirty-ninth day.

In general, this book is in the Greek very beautiful: the combat between Irus and Ulysses is naturally described; it is indeed between beggars, but yet not without dignity, it being almost of the same nature with the single combats practised amongst heroes in their most solemn games; as is evident from that in the Iliad, at the funeral of Patroclus. I could wish Homer had not condescended to those low jests and mean railleries towards the conclusion: it is true, they are not without effect, as they agree with the characters of the suitors and make Ulysses a spectator of the disorders of his own family, and provoke him to a speedy vengeance: but might not more serious provocations have been found out, such as might become the gravity and majesty of epic poetry? Or if gaiety was essential to his characters, are quibbles so too? These may be thought to be of the same level with those conceits which Milton puts into the mouth of the devil, and which disgrace his poem. But the dignity, the tenderness, and justness of the sentiments, in all the speeches of Penelope, more than atone for the low railleries of Eurymachus.

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

* B O O K XIX.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The discovery of Ulysses to Euryclea.

Ulysses and his son remove the weapons out of the armoury. Ulysses in conversation with Penelope gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertained her husband in Crete; and describes exactly his person and dress, affirms to have heard of him in Phæacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month. He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea, who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar upon his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus. The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.

CONSULTING secret with the blue-ey'd maid,
Still in the dome divine Ulysses staid:
Revenge mature for act inflam'd his breast;
And thus the son, the fervent fire addrest.

* The scene still continues in the palace of Ulysses; but new persons are introduced to carry on the action, and diversify the story: this book opens with a repetition from the sixteenth; the ancients marked it with an asterism, without any obelisk, to shew that it was here inserted with propriety: as we draw nearer the conclusion of the poem, the repetitions are more frequent. Virgil has generally avoided them, and indeed it may be observed, that these two poets differ in nothing more than the manner of their elocution: Virgil is full, but Homer even overflows; and this agrees with their general characters. Homer is like those painters of whom Apelles used to complain, that they left nothing to be

Instant convey those steely stores of war 5
 To distant rooms, dispos'd with secret care :
 The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
 To sooth their fears a specious reason feign :
 Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
 Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost, 10
 His arms deform'd, the roof they won't adorn :
 From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.
 Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspir'd,
 Lest they by sight of swords to fury fir'd ;
 Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul, 15
 Defame the bridal feast, and friendly bowl.

The prince obedient to the sage command,
 To Euryclea thus : the female band
 In their apartments keep ; secure the doors :
 These swarthy arms among the covert stores 20
 Are seemlier hid ; my thoughtless youth they blame,
 Imbrown'd with vapour of the smould'ring flame.

In happy hour, (pleas'd Euryclea cries)
 Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wise !

imagined by the spectator, and made too accurate representations ;
 but Virgil is like Timantes in Pliny. “ Timanti plurimum ad-
 “ fuit ingenii, in omnibus operibus ejus intelligitur plus semper
 “ quam pingitur :” and again, “ ostendit etiam quæ occultat.”

Eustathius observes, that the unexpected opportunity to remove
 the arms in the absence of the suitors, occasions this repetition :
 in the sixteenth book Ulysses told Telemachus he would give a
 sign when he should make the removal, despairing of an oppor-
 tunity to give a public direction, without danger from the suitors ;
 he therefore wisely lays hold of the present hour which happily
 favours his desires, and enjoins the arms to be removed imme-
 diately.

v. 18. ——— the female band
 In their apartments keep, &c.]

It is not without sufficient reason that Telemachus distrusts the
 maids ; many of them were in the interest of the suitors : it was
 therefore necessary to conceal the place to which the arms were
 conveyed, lest they should betray the secret. Eustathius.

Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care, 25
Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.

But who the lighted taper will provide,
(The female train retir'd) your toils to guide?

Without infringing hospitable right,
This guest (he cry'd) shall bear the guiding light: 30
I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast;
They share the meal that earn it ere they taste.

He said; from female ken she strait secures
The purpos'd deed, and guards the bolted doors:
Auxiliar to his son, Ulysses bears 35 }
The plummy-crested helms, and pointed spears,
With shields indented deep in glorious wars. }
Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
And with her golden lamp his toil befriends,

v. 38. *Minerva ——— with her golden lamp ———*] The office here ascribed to Minerva gave great offence to Rapin, and he censured it as mean, and unworthy of the goddess; but Eustathius fully vindicates Homer; Pallas is here an allegorical deity intended by the poet to express the wisdom of Ulysses; he acts with as much prudence as if Minerva herself guided him in all his ways. We are to gather from this description, that Ulysses formed all the actions of this night with the utmost wisdom, or according to the Greek proverb, ἐν νυκτὶ βουλῇ, the “councils of this night” were regulated with the exactest prudence and secrecy. Spondanus observes, that Callimachus, a statuary in Athens, made an image of Minerva according to this picture in Homer: she held a lamp of gold, which was filled with an oil of such an unwaisting nature, as not to want to be replenished in the space of a whole year. See lib. i. of Pausanias. Dacier judges, that though a lamp was unknown in the days of Ulysses, yet it might be not so in the days of Homer, and therefore he might speak of it; for instance, the trumpet was not known in the Trojan war, yet Homer mentions it, because it was used in his age. But this is no answer; for Homer does not say that the trumpet was used during the siege of Troy; if he had, he would have been guilty of a gross anachronism, but he speaks of it by way of allusion, as a thing well known in his time. Here therefore the case is different; for Ulysses is the person who is supposed to make use of this lamp, and Dacier allows that it was unknown in his age, and consequently he ought not to use it at all. It may therefore perhaps be most probable, that Callimachus did not form his statue from this ori-

Not such the sickly beams, which unsincere, 40
 Gild the gross vapour of this nether sphere!
 A present deity the prince confess'd,
 And wrapp'd with ecstasy the fire address'd.

What miracle thus dazzles with surprise!
 Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise: 45
 The walls where-e'er my wond'ring sight I turn,
 And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn!

Some visitant of pure ethereal race,
 With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.

Be calm, replies the fire; to none impart, 50
 But oft' revolve the vision in thy heart:
 Celestials, mantl'd in excess of light,
 Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.
 Seek thou repose; whilst here I sole remain,
 T' explore the conduct of the female train: 55

ginal; or if this be not allowed, that he fell into an error, and gave the goddess a lamp instead of a torch.

I will only further add, that this office of Minerva may be vindicated from all meanness, by observing that it is not the bare act of carrying the torch which the goddess here executes; she improves it into a miracle; the whole palace is enlightened with a celestial fire, and Ulysses and Telemachus gather full assurances of her favour and success from that miraculous illumination: this circumstance raises the description out of lowness into dignity.

v. 48. *Some visitant of pure ethereal race.*] Eustathius gives us a twofold explication of the words,

Αὐτὴ τοι δίκην ἐστὶ θεῶν ———

They imply either that the goddess Themis descended, or that it is the custom of celestial powers to manifest themselves in such illuminations, without appearing visibly. The latter interpretation seems most natural, and makes the construction easy, whereas the other is scarce to be understood without supplying ἀπὸ before θεῶν: otherwise it must be allowed, that the former opinion is not unhappy: Ulysses tells his son, that the goddess of justice is sent by the gods to assist him in taking vengeance on the suitors: Themis is a very proper deity to be introduced upon such an occasion, and shews that Ulysses proceeded upon the strictest rules of equity, in the distribution of his rewards and punishments. But the passage will not admit this sense, it being evidently Pallas, not Themis, who appears.

The penfive queen perchance defires to know
The series of my toils, to sooth her woe.

With tapers flaming day his train attends,
His bright alcove th' obsequious youth ascends:
Soft slumb'rous shades his drooping eye-lids close, 60
'Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses staid,
In council secret with the martial maid;
Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait
The queen, descending from her bow'r of state. 65
Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's penfive air.

An iv'ry seat with silver ringlets grac'd,
By fam'd Icmalius wrought, the menials plac'd:
With iv'ry silver'd thick the foot-stool shone, 70
O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
The sov'reign seat with graceful air she prefs'd;
To different tasks their toil the nymphs address'd:
The golden goblets some, and some restor'd
From stains of luxury the polish'd board: 75
These to remove th' expiring embers came,
While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mien
Renew'd th' attack, incontinent of spleen:
Avaunt, she cry'd, offensive to my sight! 80
Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night,
Into the woman-state asquint to pry;
A day-devourer, and an ev'ning spy!

v. 69. *By fam'd Icmalius wrought* ———] Homer in both his poems takes all opportunities of celebrating the famous artisans of antiquity; I doubt not but most of them were his particular friends, and to do them honour, he gave them place in his works, and rendered their names and his own gratitude immortal. We may likewise learn the nature of the noblest pieces of art in Homer's days, from his poetry.

v. 82. *Into the woman-state asquint to pry.*] This is the true reason why Melantho is out of humour (says Madam Dacier:) she had some affairs upon her hands, which demanded no witnesses,

Vagrant be gone! before this blazing brand
Shall urge — and wav'd it hissing in her hand. 85

Th' insulted hero rolls his wrathful eyes,
And, Why, so turbulent of soul? he cries;
Can these lean shrivel'd limbs unnerv'd with age,
These poor but honest rags, enkindle rage?
In crouds, we wear the badge of hungry fate; 90
And beg, degraded from superior state!
Constrain'd! a rent-charge on the rich I live;
Reduc'd to crave the good I once could give:
A palace, wealth, and slaves I late possess'd,
And all that makes the great be call'd the bless'd: 95
My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
Embrac'd the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.
Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid!
'Tis Jove's high will, and be his will obey'd!
Nor think thyself exempt: that rosy prime 100
Must share the general doom of with'ring time:
To some new channel soon, the changeful tide
Of royal grace th' offended queen may guide;
And her lov'd lord unplume thy tow'ring pride. }
Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware: 105
Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care;

meaning the vicious commerce between her and Eurymachus. Women never forgive their own sex a frailty. Dacier is undoubtedly in an error; Eurymachus in the end of the last book left the palace, and therefore Melantho could not speak out of any apprehensions of having a stop put to her affairs this night, by the presence of Ulysses.

v. 106. *Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care.*] It may be asked why Telemachus is said to owe the preservation of his life to Apollo? Eustathius answers, that he was called "Ο θεός κερρόφος by antiquity; and that Daphne from being his favourite was named κερροθαλεία: but perhaps that epithet was appropriated to Apollo, because all immature deaths in the male sex were ascribed to him, as they were to Diana in the female; it may therefore be said with great propriety that it is owing to the favour of Apollo, that Telemachus had not died an immature death, or that he was arrived to manhood: Eustathius adds, that Apollo

Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys;
Potent to punish what he cannot praise.

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sov'reign's ear;
Loquacious insolent! she cries, forbear: 110

To thee the purpose of my soul I told;
Venial discourse, unblam'd, with him to hold:

The storied labours of my wand'ring lord,
To soothe my grief he haply may record:

Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung:

Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue! 116

as he is the sun, may be called the nourisher of all things that breathe, as well as of the inanimate creation; it is owing to his influence that every being comes to maturity, and in this sense likewise he may be called *κεροτρόφος*. What Eustathius ascribes to Daphne, Dacier applies to Diana, and tells us, that she was called *κεροθαλεία*, and that the antients celebrated a festival in her honour for the health of their infants.

v. 110. *Loquacious insolent!* —] Were this place to be rendered literally, it would be thus, “Thou bold impudent bitch;” *θαρσαλέη κύον ἀδδεῖς*. It is spoken by Penelope. In our age it is an expression so vulgar, as not to be uttered in common conversation, much less in epic poetry: it is true, it fully expresses the height of impudence, and in Homer's time it was no more mean, than calling a coward a deer, and both the expressions are joined together in the first of the Iliad.

Thou dog in forehead, but in heart a deer.

It is there spoken by Achilles: and in another place of the Iliad Jupiter applies it to his wife, and calls Juno an impudent bitch; a plain indication that the expression was not mean, as it is at this day, because it was used by the greatest of heroes, and the supreme of gods.

v. 116. *Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue!*] The expression in the Greek is remarkable.

— “Ὁ σὴ κεφαλῇ ἀναμάξεις.

“Which you shall wipe upon your own head,” or as Eustathius explains it, “a crime which you shall make to cleave to your own head:” a similar expression (adds the same author) occurs in Sophocles.

— κατὰ λαιροῖσιν κάρα

Κηλίδας ἐξέμαξεν.

But thou on whom my palace cares depend,
 Eurynomè, regard the stranger-friend :
 A seat, soft spread with furry spoils, prepare ;
 Due-distant, for us both to speak, and hear. 120

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste :
 A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she plac'd :
 Due-distant for discourse the hero sat ;
 When thus the sov'reign from her chair of state :
 Reveal, obsequious to my first demand, 125
 Thy name, thy lineage, and thy native land.

He thus : O queen ! whose far-resounding fame
 Is bounded only by the starry frame,
 Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
 Whose pious rule a warlike race obey ! 130
 In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd ;
 Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd :
 With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stor'd ;
 And fish of ev'ry fin thy seas afford ;
 Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess ; 135
 And bless the pow'r that still delights to bless.

From whence it appears, that the blood that was found upon the sword, was wiped upon the head of the slain ; an intimation that his own blood was fallen upon the head of the deceased, and the living were free from it. This is a very remarkable custom, and there are many expressions like it in the scriptures ; namely “ his blood be upon his own head.” It was customary amongst the Romans to wash their hands, in token of innocence and purity from blood : thus the Roman governour washed his hands, and said, “ I am innocent of the blood of this just person.”

v. 129. *Consummate pattern of imperial sway.*] Homer here gives an amiable picture of a mild and just government : it is a truth certain and universal, where the subject enjoys the fruits of his industry, the earth will always be well cultivated, and bring forth in abundance ; the sea will furnish the land with plenty of fishes, and men will plant when they are sure to gather the fruits. It is the constant observation of all travellers, the worst situation under an easy government enjoys more plenty, and is fuller of inhabitants, than the best soil and happiest situation under an arbitrary power. This whole passage is very beautiful, and the more beautiful because the words proceed from the mouth of a king.

Gracious permit this pray'r, imperial dame!
 Forbear to know my lineage, or my name:
 Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep;
 In sweet oblivion let my sorrow sleep! 140
 My woes awak'd will violate your ear;
 And to this gay censorious train appear
 A winy vapour melting in a tear. }

Their gifts the gods resum'd (the queen rejoin'd)
 Exterious grace, and energy of mind; 145
 When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,
 Auxiliar troops combin'd, to conquer Troy.
 My lord's protecting hand alone wou'd raise
 My drooping verdure, and extend my praise!
 Peers from the distant Samian shore resort; 150
 Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court:
 Zacynthus, green with ever-shady groves,
 And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves:
 Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
 They press the Hymenæan rite abhorr'd. 155
 Mis-rule thus mingling with domestic cares,
 I live regardless of my state-affairs:
 Receive no stranger-guest, no poor relieve;
 But ever for my lord in secret grieve!—
 This art, instinct by some celestial pow'r, 160
 I try'd, elusive of the bridal hour:
 " Ye peers I cry, who press to gain a heart,
 " Where dead Ulysses claims no future part;
 " Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
 " 'Till this funereal web my labours end: 165
 " Cease, 'till to good Laertes I bequeath
 " A pall of state, the ornament of death.
 " For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
 " With just reproach were licens'd to defame; 169
 " Should he, long honour'd in supreme command,
 " Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."

The fiction pleas'd! their loves I long elude;
 The night still ravell'd, what the day renew'd.
 Three years successful in my art conceal'd,
 My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd: 175
 Befriended by my own domestic spies,
 The woof unwrought the suitor-train surprise.
 From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
 And fear forbids to falsify the breed.
 My anxious parents urge a speedy choice, 180
 And to their suffrage gain the filial voice:
 For rule mature, Telemachus deplores
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores —
 But stranger! as thy days seem full of fate,
 Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate: 185
 Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race:
 No poor unfather'd product of disgrace.

Princess! he cries, renew'd by your command,
 The dear remembrance of my native land,
 Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source; 190
 And tears repeat their long-forgotten course!
 So pays the wretch whom fate constrains to roam,
 The dues of nature to his natal home! —
 But inward on my soul let sorrow prey;
 Your sov'reign will my duty bids obey. 195

Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil!
 And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle:

v. 196, &c. *Crete* —] It is not without a good reason that Ulysses is so particular in the geography of Crete; he does it, that Penelope from the knowledge of the truth which he speaks concerning that island, may be induced to give the reader credit to his succeeding fictions. In the *Iliad*, Homer calls Crete *ἐκατόπολις*, or the island with an hundred cities, lib. ii.

Crete's hundred cities pour forth all her sons.

Here he affirms it to have no more than ninety. Strabo is very full upon this difficulty, lib. x. Ephorus (says that author) judges that ten cities were built by the Dorians after the Trojan war, under Althæmenes; and therefore Ulysses here mentions Crete as

Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
In various tongues avow their various claims :

having only ninety : but this opinion carries no probability. Others affirm, that ten cities were demolished by the enemies of Idomeneus ; but this is no more than a conjecture : the truth is, Homer does not affirm that there were an hundred cities in the time of the war with Troy, but in his own age ; (for the poet in that place speaks in his own person) if he had put the words into the mouth of any one who had lived in the time of the war, he would not have called it the isle of the hundred, but ninety cities, according to this description of Ulysses ; it being very improbable, that ten of the Cretan cities should be destroyed, either during the war, or after the return of Idomeneus ; for Homer himself testifies that he returned safe to Crete with all his soldiers, lib. iii. of the *Odyssey*.

And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.

And therefore he had sufficient forces to defend his country : but though we allow that those ten cities had been destroyed after his return, yet how could Ulysses come to the knowledge of it, having neither been in Crete, nor met with any Cretan to inform him in all his voyages ? It is therefore probable that in the time of the Trojan war Crete had no more than ninety cities, but an hundred in the days of Homer : and this fully reconciles the *Iliad* with the *Odyssey* ; in the *Odyssey* it is Ulysses that speaks, in the *Iliad*, Homer.

Virgil speaks of Crete after the manner of Homer.

“ Creta Jovis magni medio jacet insula ponto,
“ Centum urbes habitant magnas, uberrima regna.”

The other ten cities were built by the Dorians (as Ephorus writes) under Althæmenes.

v. 109. *In various tongues* ———] The meaning of this is, that the natural inhabitants of Crete were mixed with strangers who had settled in the island ; or as some imagine (says Eustathius) Ulysses speaks thus out of fear, lest Penelope should discover him not to be a native of Crete from his wrong pronounciation of the language of the Cretans. We may gather from Strabo, that the Dorians inhabited the eastern parts, the Cydonians the western, the Eteo-Cretans the southern, and the rest of the nation being most powerful, possess the plain country lying toward the north : the Eteo-Cretans, that is, the true Cretans, were the original inhabitants of the island, and probably also the Cydonians. There is some difficulty in the word *τριχάϊνες*. Andron the historian (continus Strabo) affirms, that the Dorians who lived near Parnassus planted a colony in Crete, and built three cities, and from thence called themselves *τριχάϊνες*, “ quasi tripartiti.” But Strabo rejects this opinion of Andron, for these Dorians possess four cities, and their

Cydonians dreadful with the bended yew, 200
 And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due :
 The Dorians, plum'd amid the files of war,
 Her foodful glebe with fierce Achaians share ;
 Cnossus, her capital of high command ;
 Where scepter'd Minos with impartial hand 205
 Divided right ; each ninth revolving year,
 By Jove receiv'd in council to confer.

country was called *τρίγροποις* ; he therefore believes them to have taken that name from a triple crest, or from having them adorned with hair after the manner of a plumage, from *τρίχες* signifying hair. But perhaps Strabo is in a mistake, for Thucydides, lib. i. p. 107. and Diodorus, lib. xi. p. 60. confirm the opinion of Andron. The words of Strabo have given great trouble to the commentators, and they ingenuously confess they cannot understand them. The expression is *τρίχινος λόφος ἐφ' αὐτῷ* : the difficulty lies in *ἐφ' αὐτῷ* ; but if we read the sentence thus, all will be plain, *τρίχινος λόφος, ἢ ἐφ' αὐτῷ*, that is, crests adorned with hair, or something like it, from *ἐφ' αὐτῷ*, “æqualis.” Dacier.

v. 206. ——— *each ninth revolving year, &c.*] This Minos king of Crete was an excellent lawgiver ; and as Ephorus writes, (says Strabo) to give his laws the greater veneration he used to descend into a cave sacred to Jupiter, and pretend that he had there received them from the mouth of that deity ; this is the reason why Homer tells us he conversed with Jupiter. Thus also Numa Pompilius boasted of the same favour from *Ægeria*, to make his decrees to be received by the Romans. The only difficulty is in the word *ἐννέωρος* ; and it has been generally believed to imply, that Minos continued in the cave of Jupiter nine whole years : but Casaubon remarks that it never signifies nine years, but every ninth year ; as *τρίαιτος* does not mean three days, but the third day ; and this agrees exactly with the history of Minos, (see Valerius Maximus, lib. i. cap. 2.) who was accustomed to review and rectify all his laws every ninth year. Plato quotes this passage in his piece, entitled *Minos*, and puts this last observation beyond all dispute : “Homer tells us (says that author) that Minos conversed with Jupiter every ninth year ; *ἐνάτῳ ἔται*, and went to be instructed by him as a scholar by a master ;” and a little lower he adds, *ἐφοίτα δὲ ἐνάτῳ ἔττει εἰς ἄντρον διδοῖς ὁ Μίνως*, &c. that is, “he went into the cave of Jupiter, to learn new laws, or to reform the old which he had received in the former period,” *τῇ προτέρᾳ ἐννεα-τρίδι*. This Minos was the most just of all mankind, and for this reason was supposed to be made one of the infernal judges. Plutarch in the life of Demetrius makes a fine remark upon this description of Minos ; “Homer (says he) has not honoured with the

His son Deucalion bore successive sway ;
 His son, who gave me first to view the day !
 The royal bed an elder issue blest, 210
 Idomeneus, whom Ilian fields attest
 Of matchless deed : untrain'd to martial toil
 I liv'd inglorious in my native isle,
 Studious of peace ; and Æthon is my name.
 'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came ; 215
 For elemental war, and wint'ry Jove,
 From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
 To bright Lucina's fane ; the shelvy coast
 Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.

“ glorious title of the disciple of Jupiter, the greatest warrior or
 “ oppressor, or a renowned tyrant ; but the man famous for his
 “ justice and probity, a legislator, and a benefactor to mankind.”
 Dacier.

v. 207. *By Jove receiv'd in council to confer.*] The word in the Greek is *δαρις*, and Plato fully explains it in his *Minos* ; *δαρις* is the discourse, *δαρις* the person who discourses ; *ὁ συνεσιας ἐν λόγοις* : others (continues Plato) understand it to signify the guest of Jupiter, *συμπότην, συμπαισιν*, a person that was admitted to the table of Jupiter, or a partaker in his diversions ; but the falsity of this opinion (adds he) will sufficiently appear, if we remember, that of all the Greeks, the Cretans and Lacedemonians, who learned it from them, alone abstain from computations, and diversions arising from them ; and in particular this is one of the laws of Minos enacted in Crete, *μὴ συμπίνειν ἀλλήλοις εἰς μέθην*, commanding the Cretans not to drink in their entertainments to excess. Thus far Dacier ; to which I shall add that this remark of Plato may perhaps contribute greatly to the glory of Minos, but gives little honour to Jupiter ; it insinuates that a person who drinks with that deity, might endanger his sobriety ; otherwise to be admitted to the table of Jupiter is an instance of favour and familiarity, and would have been an honour to Minos. Horace is of this opinion, for speaking of Tantalus, lib. i. *Carm.* he mentions it as a peculiar testimony of favour ;

“ Occidit & Pelopis genitor, conviva deorum.”

That is, according to Homer's expression, *Σεῶν συνεσιας* or *συμπότης*.

v. 218. *To bright Lucina's fane.*] Strabo informs us that upon the Amnisus there is a cave sacred to Ilithya, or Lucina, who presides over child-birth. The reason given by Eustathius why the poet places the cave by that river is too frivolous to be recited : it

His vessels moor'd (an incommodious port!) 220
 The hero speeded to the Cnossian court:
 Ardent the partner of his arms to find;
 In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.
 Vain hope! ten suns had warm'd the western strand,
 Since my brave brother with his Cretan band 225
 Had fail'd for Troy: but to the genial feast
 My honour'd roof receiv'd the royal guest:
 Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
 A public treat, with jars of gen'rous wine.
 Twelve days, while Boreas vex'd th' aerial space, 230
 My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace:
 And when the north had ceas'd the stormy roar,
 He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore.
 Thus the fam'd hero, perfected in wiles,
 With fair similitude of truth beguiles 235

is probable that it was called the cave of Ilithya, because some great lady had made use of it, upon an occasion in which women invoke the assistance of that goddess; or perhaps because water is one of the great principles of generation, the temple of Lucina could not be placed in a more proper situation, than upon the banks of a river, and close by the sea. Dacier.

v. 228. *Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
A public treat ———]*

It was not to be expected, and indeed it was almost impossible that one person should entertain Ulysses and his whole fleet, which consisted of twelve vessels. This passage therefore gives us a remarkable custom of antiquity, which was, that when any person with too great a number of attendants arrived in other countries, the prince received the chief personage and his particular friends, and the rest were entertained at the public expence. Dacier.

v. 235. *With fair similitude of truth beguiles.]* The word in the Greek is ἵσκειν, which has been usually interpreted to be the same with εἰλεγε, but those that speak with more exactness derive it from ἡίσκει, εἰκάζειν, ἀπεικονίζων πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, that is, he accommodated and adapted his fictions to probability or truth; and Hesychius explains the same word by εἰκάζω, ὁμοιοῶ: Horace almost literally translates this verse:

“Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,
 “Primo ne medium medio ne discrepat imum.”

The queen's attentive ear : dissolv'd in woe,
 From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow.
 As snows collected on the mountain freeze ;
 When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,
 The fleecy pile obeys the whisp'ring gales,
 Ends in a stream, and murmurs thro' the vales :
 So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,
 Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd :

240

And indeed in this line the whole art of an epic poem is comprehended, which is a mixture of truths and fictions, but fictions conformable to verity ; or to speak in the language of a critic, the fable of the epic poem should be both probable and marvellous ; astonishing, yet credible ; if it be only credible, it differs in nothing from history ; if only marvellous, it is no better than a romance. The great secret therefore of an epic writer is to produce in the reader's mind at the same time both belief and astonishment ; and this is here performed by Ulysses. Dacier sur l'Aristotle.

v. 238. *As snows collected, &c.*] It is not easy to take the point of this simile. Mons. Perrault grievously mistakes it : " The description (says he) which Homer gives us of the sorrow of Penelope is very unaccountable ; her body melted like snow upon a high mountain, when the east wind melts it, and the snow thus melted fills the rivers ; thus it was that the fair cheeks of Penelope melted." This, says Perrault, is translated word for word. But in reality it resembles Homer in nothing but the repetition of the word " melted," or *τήκετο*, which in modern languages is burthensome to the ear, but not in the Greek ; for the word differs from itself according to its different formation, almost as much as a new one, and gives a distant sound ; for instance, *τήκετο*, *τήκομένης*, *κατέτηξεν* : whereas there is almost an identity of sound in " melt, melted, or melting ;" or in the French, " liquifier, liquifiée, liquifioient." Neither has Perrault entered into the sense of the comparison : *τήκετο χεῖρας* is only a figurative hyperbole, as when we say a person is " consumed or wasted" with grief ; or perhaps *τήκετο* signifies no more than " humectō," as *τακέρως* " humidus." In reality it is the quantity of tears that is intended to be represented, and the simile is thus to be understood : the snows heaped upon the mountains by the cold west wind, are the sorrows accumulated in the soul of Penelope ; the warm eastern wind, which dissolves these snows, is the recital of Ulysses, which melts those sorrows into tears, and makes them flow. When Agamemnon weeps, in the ninth of the Iliad, his tears are compared to a fountain of water falling from a rock ; but women being more profuse of tears, those of Penelope are here compared to a river.

She to her present lord laments him lost,
 And views that object which she wants the most! 245
 With'ring at heart to see the weeping fair,
 His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare;
 Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
 Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;
 Firm wisdom interdicts the soft'ning tear. 250

v. 244. *She to her present lord laments him lost.*] Dacier observes that this is added by Homer not for our information, for we already know it; but because it is a reflection which must necessarily occur to every reader: it is a thing extraordinary to lament a person present, as if he were absolutely lost; and we reap a double satisfaction from the relation, by observing the behaviour of Penelope towards Ulysses, and of Ulysses towards Penelope; while he is at the same time, in one sense both absent and present.

v. 247. *His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare.*] There is a beautiful contrast between Ulysses and Penelope; Penelope indulges her passion for Ulysses; Ulysses restrains his for Penelope: the picture of Ulysses is drawn to the life, he is assaulted at once with several passions, astonishment and admiration on the one side, and compassion and a desire to comfort Penelope on the other; these passions being in an equal balance, and exerting an equal force, he remains fixed, like a wave driven by contrary winds, and yields to neither of their impulses; it is thus Ulysses continues in a steady admiration, as if he had lost all thought. This passage is too beautiful not to have been explained by the ancients; Plutarch quotes it as an instance of the command a wise man ought to have over his passions. "Ulysses who was the most eloquent, yet was the most silent of men, all his faculties were obedient, and subject to reason, he commanded his eye not to weep, his tongue not to speak, and his very heart not to pant or tremble: his reason influenced even his inward motions, and subdued the very blood and vital spirit." And in his treatise of Moral Virtues, he again quotes these verses; "Ulysses had compleatly subjected all his faculties to right reason, and he held even his spirits, his blood, and his tears under the government of his judgment." Virgil paints Dido in the infernal shades almost in the same colours with Ulysses:

"Illa solo fixos oculos averfa tenebat,
 "Nec magis incepto vultum sermone movetur
 "Quàm si dura fìlex, aut stet Marpesia cautes."

v. 248. *Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear.*] Eustathius informs us, that Homer applied this image of horny, or *κερατόειδες*, to the eye, because one of the coats of it is said to be of an horny substance; but this is merely fanciful: if another tunic of the eye

A speechless interval of grief ensues,

'Till thus the queen the tender theme renews.

Stranger ! that ere thy hospitable roof

Ulysses grac'd, confirm by faithful proof :

Delineate to my view my warlike lord, 255

His form, his habit, and his train record.

'Tis hard, he cries, to bring to sudden fight

Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight :

Rare on the mind those images are trac'd,

Whose footsteps twenty winters have defac'd : 260

But what I can, receive.—In ample mode,

A robe of military purple flow'd

had been freely, there might have been some ground for the allusion ; for Homer joins both of them in the illustration, and only meant to represent the steadfastness of the eye of Ulysses, in this affecting interview.

v. 262, &c. *A robe of military purple, &c.*] This is a remarkable passage, and gives us an exact description of the habit of a king in the days of Homer, or perhaps still earlier in the days of Ulysses. Purple seems antiently to have been appropriated to kings, and to them on whom they bestowed it ; thus Judges viii. 26. the sacred historian mentions purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian. Thus Esther viii. 15. a garment of fine linen and purple is given to a favourite by king Ahasuerus ; and 1 Maccabees xliii. the Jews made a decree, that Simon should wear purple and gold, and that none of the people should wear purple or a buckle of gold without his permission, in token that he was the chief magistrate of the Jews ; thus also 1 Mac. x. 89. Alexander sent Jonathan a buckle of gold, as the use is to be given to such as are of the king's blood. Ulysses is here drest much after the same manner ; he wears purple, and a buckle or clasp of gold, as a sign of his regality. But what I would chiefly observe is, that the art of embroidery was known in those early ages, nay perhaps was in greater perfection than at this day ; the embroidery was of divers colours, as we may gather from the epithet applied to the fawn, ποικίλον. Some persons indeed tell us, that this was interwoven into the cloth, and was made in the loom, but the words of Homer will admit of the other interpretation, and it is evident that embroidery was known amongst the orientals in the age of Ulysses, from Judges, v. 30. " Have they not sped ? have they not divided the prey, to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil ?" Here is evidently mention made of embroidery ; and perhaps such was this robe of Ulysses ; but

O'er all his frame: illustrious on his breast,
 The double clasping gold the king confest.
 In the rich woof a hound, mosaic-drawn, 265
 Bore on full stretch, and seiz'd a dappl'd fawn:
 Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold;
 They pant, and struggle in the moving gold.
 Fine as a filmy web beneath it shone
 A vest, that dazzl'd like a cloudless sun: 270
 The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,
 In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.
 A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
 I gave, enamel'd with Vulcanian art:
 A mantle purple-ting'd, and radiant vest, 275 }
 Dimension'd equal to his size, express
 Affection grateful to my honour'd guest. }
 A fav'rite herald in his train I knew,
 His visage solemn sad, of sable hue:
 Short woolly curls o'erfleec'd his bending head, 280
 O'er which a promontory-shoulder spread:
 Eurybates! in whose large soul alone
 Ulysses view'd an image of his own.

however this be, it is manifest that all manner of creatures were figured upon the habit of great personages, and that those creatures were in-wrought so naturally as to seem to be alive.

v. 275. ——— radiant vest,
 Dimension'd equal to his size ———]

It may be asked what is the meaning of the *τερμιόεντα χιτῶνα* here mentioned by Ulysses? Eustathius explains it by *σύμμετρος*, that is, neither too long nor too short, too wide or too scanty, but exactly corresponding to the make of the body. Hesiod uses the same word in the same sense; and Hesychius interprets it in the same manner, *Εὐμέτρον, καὶ μέχρι τῶν ποδῶν τερμαλίζόμενον*. Dacier.

v. 278. *A fav'rite herald* ———] This is very artful in Ulysses: Penelope had asked what kind of person her husband was; Ulysses fears to give a description of himself, lest by drawing the copy like the original now before the eyes of Penelope, she should discover him to be Ulysses: he therefore diverts the enquiry, yet at the same time satisfies her curiosity, by adding a new circumstance to confirm his veracity by describing his attendant and herald Eurybates. Dacier,

His speech the tempest of her grief restor'd,
 In all he told she recogniz'd her lord : 285
 But when the storm was spent in plenteous show'rs ;
 A pause inspiriting her languish'd pow'rs :
 O thou, she cry'd, whom first inclement fate
 Made welcome to my hospitable gate ;
 With all thy wants the name of poor shall end ; 290
 Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend !
 The vest much envy'd on your native coast,
 And regal robe with figur'd gold embost,
 In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
 When my lov'd lord this blissful bow'r enjoy'd : 295
 The fall of Troy erroneous and forlorn
 Doom'd to survive, and never to return !

Then he, with pity touch'd : O royal dame !
 Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
 From the devouring rage of grief reclaim. 300 }
 I not the fondness of your soul reprove
 For such a lord ! who crown'd your virgin-love
 With the dear blessing of a fair increase ;
 Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace :
 Yet while I speak, the mighty woe suspend ; 305
 Truth forms my tale ; to pleasing truth attend.
 The royal object of your dearest care,
 Breathes in no distant clime the vital air :
 In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
 Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd : 310
 Without retinue, to that friendly shore
 Welcom'd with gifts of price, a sumless store !
 His sacrilegious train, who dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the god of day,
 Were doom'd by Jove, and Phœbus' just decree, 315
 To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.
 To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
 A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,

And rode the storm; 'till by the billows tost,
He landed on the fair Phæacian coast.

320

That race who emulate the life of gods,
Receive him joyous to their blest abodes :
Large gifts confer, a ready sail command,
To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.

But your wise lord, (in whose capacious soul
High schemes of pow'r in just succession roll)
His Ithaca refus'd from fav'ring fate,

325

'Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.

Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sov'reign sway

The protian tribes, a duteous race, obey :

330

And bade the gods this added truth attest,

(While pure libations crown'd the genial feast)

That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,

To waft the hero to his natal land.

I for Dulichium urge the wat'ry way,

335

But first the Ulyssæan wealth survey :

So rich the value of a store so vast

Demands the pomp of centuries to waste !

v. 327. *His Ithaca refus'd from fav'ring fate,*

'Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.]

Ulysses amassed great riches by being driven from country to country : every prince where he arrived made him great presents, according to the laudable customs of hospitality in former ages. The word in the Greek (observes Dacier) is ἀγυρᾶζειν, it is borrowed from beggars, who by strolling from place to place get their livelihood ; and hence it was made use of simply for to amass, or make collections. Hesychius explains it by συλλέγει, πωλίζει, ἐγείρει ; in which words there are two errors, and it is manifest they are corrupted : Monsieur le Fevre reads πωλίζει, ἀγείρει. Dacier.

We may observe that Ulysses gives himself great commendations through this whole interview ; he calls himself δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς, and says, that there were few men in the world like him ; that he was θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιος, or like the gods : this is not a sign of vanity or ostentation, since Ulysses speaks in the character of a stranger : he must therefore speak in the same manner as a stranger would have spoke ; that is, with honour of Ulysses, to ingratiate himself with Penelope. Besides, this conduct conduces to persuade Penelope, that he is the person he pretends to be, and by the consequence contributes to prevent a discovery.

The darling object of your royal love,
 Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove; 340
 By the fure precept of the silvan shrine,
 To form the conduct of his great design :
 Irresolute of soul, his state to shrowd
 In dark disguise, or come, a king avow'd.
 Thus lives your lord ; nor longer doom'd to roam : 345
 Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.
 By Jove, the source of good, supreme in pow'r !
 By the blest genius of this friendly bow'r !
 I ratify my speech ; before the sun
 His annual longitude of heav'n shall run ; 350
 When the pale empress of yon' starry train
 In the next month renews her faded wane,
 Ulysses will assert his rightful reign. }

What thanks ! what boon ! reply'd the queen, are due,
 When time shall prove the storied blessing true : 355
 My lord's return shou'd fate no more retard,
 Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.
 But my prophetic fears, alas ! presage,
 The wounds of destiny's relentless rage.
 I long must weep ! nor will Ulysses come, 360
 With royal gifts to send you honour'd home !—
 Your other task, ye menial train , forbear :
 Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare ;

v. 362. *Now wash the stranger, &c.*] This was one of the first rites of hospitality observed towards strangers, amongst the antients ; the scriptures abound with instances of it : Abraham offers water to wash the feet of the angels whom he mistook for strangers, &c. There was also a bath for the stranger, but this seems to have been a greater honour (as Dacier observes) than that of washing the feet ; this may be gathered from the manner in which it was performed ; the daughters of the family, even young princesses, assisted at the bath ; but the washing the feet was an office committed to servants : thus the daughter of Nestor, in the third Odyssey, bathed Telemachus, but Ulysses being disguised like a beggar, Euryclea washes his feet. This agrees exactly with another passage of scripture ; when David sent to ask Abigail to wife, 1 Sam. xxv. 41. she made answer, “ Let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the

With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn :
 Up-rising early with the purple morn, 365
 His sinews shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
 In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.
 Then with Telemachus the social feast
 Partaking free, my sole invited guest ;
 Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due, 370
 The breach of hospitable right may rue.
 The vulgar of my sex I most exceed
 In real fame, when most humane my deed :
 And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,
 If, stranger ! I permit that mean attire, 375
 Beneath the feastful bow'r. A narrow space
 Confines the circle of our destin'd race ;
 'Tis ours, with good the scanty round to grace.
 Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
 Dreaded in life, the mutter'd curse pursues ; 380
 By death dis-rob'd of all their savage pow'rs,
 Then, licens'd rage her hateful prey devours.
 But he whose in-born worth his acts commend,
 Of gentle soul, to human race a friend ;

“servants of my lord.” My memory fails me, if there be any other passage, either in the Iliad or Odyssey, where this practice of washing the feet is directly mentioned ; the reason is, this was an office performed only to inferiour persons ; the bath was for heroes and kings. Now both Homer's poems are filled with the characters of such personages, and therefore there was no room to mention it in other places : it is true, the word here is *ἀπορίψαι*, and does not necessarily imply the washing of the feet, but washing in general : yet here it is to be understood of the feet, for Euryclea in the act of washing them discovers this stranger to be Ulysses.

v. 376. ——— *A narrow space*
Confines the circle of our destin'd race.]

The sense is here cut short, and Homer, like a good painter, leaves something to be supplied by the reader's imagination. Life is short (says Penelope) we ought therefore to employ it in doing good. The motive indeed which she uses, is not intirely conformable to true theology ; she here proposes glory as the sole aim of doing virtuous actions ; though in other places Homer plainly asserts, that we ought to act with piety to please the gods. Dacier.

The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame, 385
And distant tongues extol the patron-name.

Princess, he cry'd, in vain your bounties flow
On me, confirm'd, and obstinate in woe,
When my lov'd Crete receiv'd my final view,
And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew ; 390
These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd)
I chose, the livery of a woful mind !

Nor will my heart-corroding cares abate
With splendid palls, and canopies of state :
Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn, 395
And catch the glances of the waking morn.

The delicacy of your courtly train
To wash a wretched wand'rer wou'd disdain ;
But if, in track of long experience try'd,
And sad similitude of woes ally'd, 400

v. 399. *But if, in track of long experience, &c.]* I will have an old woman to wash me (says Ulysses). The reason of this request is not evident at first view ; but Eustathius explains it by shewing that Ulysses acts thus to avoid the insults and contempt of the younger damsels of Penelope, who had sufficiently outraged him in this and the preceding book ; they would think themselves degraded by performing such an office to a beggar. Eustathius remarks, that some antient critics rejected three verses here : it is absurd, say they, that Ulysses should chuse Euryclea for this office, who was the only person who could discover him, and ruin his designs ; he knew she was acquainted with the wound that afterwards discovers him : but the truth is, Ulysses knew Euryclea to be a person of wisdom, and he was in hopes to draw her over to his interest, and make use of her in his affairs in the future parts of the Odyssey ; and this he does upon many important occasions, in particular in locking up the palace at the time of the battle between him and the suitors ; so that by her means he prevents the report of that great incident from being carried to their partizans abroad : here therefore he artfully brings it about, that Euryclea should be assigned to this office, not only to avoid the insults of the other females, but to make use of her faithfulness and wisdom to carry on his designs, and make the way more easy to the suitors destruction. The choice therefore was prudent ; she was aged, and acquainted with human miseries, not only by reason of her age, but had herself suffered in all the afflictions of Penelope and Telemachus ; we find she is described as a mother to the whole family, and she all along adopts the afflictions of it : Eustathius therefore may perhaps be mistaken when he

Some wretch reluctant views aerial light,
To her mean hand assign the friendly rite.

Pleas'd with his wise reply, the queen rejoin'd :

Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,

In all who grac'd this hospitable bow'r

405

I ne'er discern'd, before this social hour.

Such servant as your humble choice requires,

To light receiv'd the lord of my desires,

New from the birth : and with a mother's hand

His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd :

410

Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind ;

Tho' now to life's extremest verge declin'd,

Of strength superiour to the toil assign'd.—

Rise, Euryclea ! with officious care

For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare :

415

This debt his correspondent fortunes claim,

Too like Ulysses, and perhaps the same !

Thus, old with woes my fancy paints him now !

For age untimely marks the careful brow.

Instant obsequious to the mild command,

420

Sad Euryclea rose : with trembling hand

She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes ;

And thus impassion'd to herself replies.

asserts this to be an instance of ill counsels crowned with good success. But then it may be asked, if Euryclea was a person of such wisdom and fidelity, why does not Ulysses trust her with the secret of his return ? The reason is plain, it would not only have been contrary to his cautious nature, but a breach of all decency to trust himself to Euryclea, and not to Penelope ; this would in some measure have raised the character of the servant above that of his wife and queen. Part of this note I am indebted for to M. Dacier.

v. 422. *She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes.*] Dacier observes that Aristotle in his third book of Rhetoric quotes this action of Euryclea as an instance of a paralogism familiar to Homer ; and again in his Poetics he cites it to the same purpose : a paralogism consists in making use of false reasoning, and drawing a false consequence from true premises : “ All men, says Aristotle, are naturally persuaded that where such a thing is, or is done, such another must happen ; we may therefore make them easily believe that if the last is, the first must consequently be ; but in

Son of my love, and monarch of my cares !
 What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears ! 425
 Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid
 With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid ?
 He never dar'd defraud the sacred fane,
 Of perfect hecatombs in order slain :
 There oft' implor'd his tutelary pow'r, 430
 Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour ;
 That form'd for empire with paternal care,
 His realm might recognize an equal heir.
 O destin'd head ! The pious vows are lost ;
 His god forgets him on a foreign coast !— 435

“ reality, the latter which we lay down as truth being often false,
 “ the former is so more frequently, for it does not follow, that
 “ because one thing is, another must necessarily be ; but because
 “ we are persuaded of the truth of the latter, we conclude falsely,
 “ that the former is also true.” The reader will enter into the
 meaning of Aristotle, and understand what a paralogism is, by an
 example of it ; for instance, if we were to prove a man to be in
 love, we bring it as an argument that ^{with} he is pale : now this is a false
 reasoning or paralogism, because a person may be pale from other
 reasons than love. Thus in the instance of Euryclea “ Homer
 “ (says Aristotle) imposes upon his reader, by mentioning a sign
 “ that is known, to draw a consequence from it, to prove a thing
 “ that is not known ;” that is, Homer endeavours to prove that
 the whole story concerning Euryclea is true, and that she really hid
 her eyes when she wept, because this is a consequence of passion,
 and because it is natural for persons to conceal their eyes with their
 hands while they weep. This also is a paralogism, for every syl-
 lable concerning Euryclea may be a fiction of the poet, though such
 a gesture is natural to a person in her circumstances ; the imposi-
 tion consists in this, namely, in the art of the poet, in endeavour-
 ing to deceive us into a belief, that because persons when they weep
 conceal their eyes, therefore it is true that Euryclea thus actually
 wept ; the latter may be evidently false, though the former may be
 true ; Aristotle brings this practice of Homer as an example to all
 poets how to tell lies as they ought, or agreeably.

v. 434. ———— *The pious vows are lost ;*
His god forgets him ————]

Euryclea we see is astonished to find that a person who is remark-
 able for his piety should be unfortunate ; the age was not enlight-
 ened enough to know that calamity is often a proof of virtue, and
 a trial, not a punishment. Maximus Tyrius, the Platonic,

Perhaps, like thee, poor guest! in wanton pride
 The rich insult him, and the young deride!
 Conscious of worth revil'd, thy gen'rous mind
 The friendly rite of purity declin'd;
 My will concurring with my queen's command, 440
 Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.
 A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast;
 In thy whole form Ulysses seems exprest:
 Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
 None imag'd e'er like thee my master lost. 445

Thus half discover'd thro' the dark disguise,
 With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies:
 You join your suffrage to the public vote;
 The same you think, have all beholders thought.

xxii. Dissert. excellently explains this subject: "Who (says that author) can deny Ulysses to be a man of piety? Jupiter remembers him, Minerva loves him, Mercury guides him, Calypso is enamoured with him, and Leucothea saves his life! Who then can deny but that heaven tried him with all his afflictions, that he might appear to be ^{IRKS} and deserve to be called a good man? this is the reason why he suffered at Troy, from the suitors, by the Cyclops, by Circe, and by shipwreck; this is the reason why he wandered as a vagabond, and a beggar, that he was half naked, that he was struck and insulted, and suffered a thousand insolences from the riots of the suitors: it was the favour and love of heaven that brought him into all these afflictions, and not the anger of Neptune." When a good man suffers, heaven frequently chuses him out as an hero, who knows how to behave bravely in the day of adversity; and this is agreeable to true theology.

v. 443. *In thy whole form Ulysses seems exprest, &c.*] Homer continually draws his reflections from the present object: Penelope, at the sight of this distressed and ill-clothed stranger, breaks out into a tender sentiment, and cries, "Perhaps my Ulysses is such as he!" for thus Eustathius applies the expression, ὅς τοιούτος ἦν φύσει ἀλλὰ διὰ κακῶσιν; that is, "he was not such by nature, but misfortune:" but if we understand it of a bodily resemblance, the sentiment is still beautiful, and the reader cannot without pleasure see Penelope deceived in comparing Ulysses with Ulysses. Dacier.

v. 447. ——— *the chief replies.*] This is very artful in Ulysses: if he had denied the resemblance, it might have given suspicion; he therefore confesses it, and by confessing it persuades Euclypsa that he is not the real Ulysses. Dacier.

He said: replenish'd from the purest springs, 450
 The laver straight with busy care she brings:
 In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
 The boiling fluid temperates the cold.
 Meantime revolving in his thoughtful mind
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd; 455
 His face averting from the crackling blaze,
 His shoulders intercept th' unfriendly rays.
 Thus cautious in th' obscure he hop'd to fly
 The curious search of Euryclea's eye.
 Cautious in vain! nor ceas'd the dame to find 460
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd.

v. 456. *His face averting from the crackling blaze.*] The reason why Ulysses turns toward the darkness is to avoid discovery, and that Euryclea might not examine him too curiously: but this is not the whole design of Homer; the poet thus describes Ulysses to give probability to the future story; for as Eustathius judiciously remarks, it is from this action alone that the fainting of Euryclea, her laying her hand on the chin of Ulysses, his seizure of her throat to hinder her from discovering him, escape the notice of Penelope; Ulysses is seated out of view, and withdrawn from observation. Dacier.

v. 460. *Cautious in vain! nor ceas'd the dame to find
 The scar ————]*

This story concerning the wound of Ulysses, may, I fear, in some parts of it, seem somewhat tedious; it may therefore be necessary to shew that it is introduced with judgment; and though not entirely entertaining, yet artful.

Aristotle in the eighth chap. of his *Poetics*, speaking of the union of the action of the *Odyssey*, mentions this wound of Ulysses. Homer, says he, who excelled other poets in all respects, seems perfectly to have known this defect, (viz. that all the actions of an hero do not constitute the unity of the action, but only such as are capable to be united with the fable) for in composing his *Odyssey*, he has not mentioned all the adventures of Ulysses: for example, he has not joined the wound he received upon Parnassus with the account of his feigned madness, when the Greeks assembled their army; for because one of them happened, it was neither necessary nor probable that the other should also happen; but he has inserted all that could have respect to one and the same action. Monsieur Dacier fully explains Aristotle; We have in this precept (observes that author) two remarkable events in the life of Ulysses, his feigned madness, and his wound received upon Par-

This on Parnassus (combating the boar)
 With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
 Attended by his brave maternal race,
 His grandfire sent him to the filvan chace, 465
 Autolycus the bold : (a mighty name
 For spotless faith and deeds of martial fame :

nassus : the poet mentions the wound, but is silent about his madness : he saw that the latter had no connexion either in truth or probability with the subject of his poem, and therefore he says not a word of it ; he has acted otherwise with respect to the wound received upon Parnassus : for although that wound was no more to the matter of his poem, than the madness, yet he speaks of it, because he found an opportunity of inserting it so naturally into his principal action, that it becomes a necessary part of it, since it causes a remembrance of his hero, that is, since it is the occasion of Euryclea's discovering Ulysses ; so that this history which is here related at length is no foreign episode, but a natural part of the subject, by being thus artfully united to it. This fully teaches us of what nature the different parts which a poet uses to form one and the same action ought to be ; namely, either necessary or probable consequences of one another, as the remembrance of Ulysses was of this wound : every adventure then that has not this connexion ought to be rejected as foreign, and as breaking the unity of the action : and therefore Homer took care not to interrupt the unity of his Odyssey, by the episode of the feigned madness of Ulysses ; or that incident could not be produced by any that were necessary or proper to the poem, nor produce any that had the least relation to it.

Bossu fully agrees with Aristotle and Dacier, and gathers from this episode that some incidents which make not directly any part of the action or the fable may be inserted into a poem, if those incidents are necessary to clear up any part of the fable or action.

This remembrance, or discovery by the wound, is mentioned in another place ; see the twenty-first Odyssey. Aristotle in his seventeenth chap. of the Poetics, prefers this remembrance to that there made to Eumæus : It is (observes that author) here managed with more address and art ; it is done without design, and seems a consequence of the story : there Ulysses himself discovers the wound : here it arises from the subject, and a series of incidents : there Ulysses has recourse to it, and it causes no surprise, because there is no great art in shewing a mark, which we are willing to have known. All remembrances therefore (says Aristotle) which produce their effects by design have little ingenuity : whereas those which are brought about by chance, surprise us, and are instances of the poet's art and address.

v. 466. *Autolycus the bold : (a mighty name
 For spotless faith ———]*

Hermes his patron-god those gifts bestow'd,
Whose shrine with weanling lambs he went to load).

This difficult passage is well explained by Dacier and Eustathius : the words are —

— ὃς ἀνθρώπων ἐκέκαστο
κλεπτοσύνην δ' ὅρκῳ τε —

which literally run thus, “ he surpassed all men in swearing and “ stealing :” a terrible character ! if it were to be understood according to the letter : it has been imagined, that Homer commends Autolycus for his address in robbery, and making equivocal oaths ; like the person (says Eustathius) who made a truce with his enemies for several days, and immediately went and ravaged their territories by night, and defended it, by telling them that the truce was not made for the night but the day : or like the person mentioned by Athenæus, who stole a fish, and gave it to his neighbour, and being questioned about it, swore, that he had it not himself, nor saw any other person steal it : but this is not the meaning of Homer, for he calls Autolycus ἑσθλός or a “ good man,” and add that this κλεπτοσύνη καὶ ὅρκος, was the gift of a god. The truth is, the former word does not here signify theft, nor the latter perjury : the former signifies a laudable address in concealing our own designs, and discovering those of our enemies ; it consists in surprising them, when they least expect us, in beating up their quarters, carrying off their convoys, their provisions, and in short in all manner of stratagems, authorized by the laws of war : ὅρκος signifies fidelity in observing an oath, and never violating the sanctity of it. Plato, in his first book de Repub. makes it plain, that this is the sense of Homer : he there quotes this passage, and asserts that he is the best guardian of an army, who knows how to steal the counsels and enterprises of the enemy, τὰ τῶν πολεμίων κλεῖναι βουλευματα, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας πρᾶξεις ; from this, it is there inferred, that justice is a kind of chicanery (κλεπτικὴ τις ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ φίλων, καὶ βλάβῃ τῶν ἐχθρῶν) by which we serve our friends, and bring detriment to our enemies ; but the answer there given to this assertion is, ἢ μὰ τὸν Δία, or, by no means : it must be understood with some restriction : it is lawful to deceive an enemy in war, but in common life criminal. The qualities therefore that Homer commends in Autolycus, are his dexterity in discovering, penetrating and preventing the designs of his enemies, and the religious observance of his oaths, and not theft and perjury ; Eustathius explains Homer by adding κλεπτοσύνην ἢ κακὴν, ὅρκον ἢ φαῦλον.

v. 468. *Hermes his patron-god these gifts bestow'd.*] The reason why Homer attributes these gifts to Mercury is, because he was the president of society, or of all things that are acted with a desire of concealment. He is also the god of speech, it therefore appertained to that deity to guard the verity of it, in particular of oaths, being the president of speaking. Dacier,

His course to Ithaca this hero sped, 470
 When the first product of Laertes' bed
 Was new disclos'd to birth ; the banquet ends,
 When Euryclea from the queen descends,
 And to his fond embrace the babe commends. }
 " Receive, she cries, your royal daughter's son ; 475
 " And name the blessing that your pray'rs have won."
 Then thus the hoary chief, " My victor arms
 " Have aw'd the realms around with dire alarms :
 " A sure memorial of my dreaded fame
 " The boy shall bear ; Ulysses be his name ! 480
 " And when with filial love the youth shall come
 " To view his mother's soil, my Delphic dome
 " With gifts of price shall send him joyous home." }
 Lur'd with the promis'd boon, when youthful prime
 Ended in man, his mother's natal clime 485
 Ulysses fought ; with fond affection dear
 Amphithea's arms receiv'd the royal heir :

v. 476. " *Receive, she cries, your royal daughter's son, &c.*] We have here an antient custom observed by the Greeks : the child was placed by the father upon the grandfather's knees, as a token that a grandchild was the most agreeable present that a son could make to a father. That this was an antient custom is evident from the Iliad.

————— συγερὰς δ' ἐπεκέκλετ' Ἐριννῦς
 μή ποτε γένασιν οἷσιν ἐφείσσεσθαι φίλον υἱὸν
 Ἐξ ἑμέθεν γεγαῶτα —————

That is, the father of Phœnix imprecated the furies, that Phœnix might never have a son to place upon his grandfather's knees.

It has been already remarked that it was customary in Greece for the parents to name the child ; here the grandfather names Ulysses : but this is done by permission of the parents, for Autolycus bids them give the name.

Γαμβρός ἐμός θυγάτης τε τίθεσθ' ὄνομα.

Ulysses was called Ὀδυσσεύς, from ὀδύσσω, " irascor ;" implying (says Eustathius) that many hated, or were enraged at, Autolycus, for the mischiefs he had done by his art in war, ἐκ τῆ μίσους διὰ κλειποσύνην : that is in other words, Autolycus called Ulysses Ὀδυσσεύς from the terrour he had been to his enemies.

Her antient * lord an equal joy possess;
 Instant he bade prepare the genial feast:
 A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled, 490
 Whose stately growth five flow'ry summers fed:
 His sons divide, and roast with artful care
 The limbs; then all the tasteful viands share.
 Nor ceas'd discourse (the banquet of the soul)
 'Till Phœbus wheeling to the western goal 495 }
 Resign'd the skies, and night involv'd the pole.
 Their drooping eyes the slumb'rous shade oppress,
 Sated they rose, and all retir'd to rest.

Soon as the morn, new-rob'd in purple light,
 Pierc'd with her golden shafts the rear of night; 500
 Ulysses, and his brave maternal race
 The young Autolyçi, assay the chace.
 Parnassus, thick perplex'd with horrid shades,
 With deep-mouth'd hounds the hunter-troop invades;
 What—time the sun, from ocean's peaceful stream, 505
 Darts o'er the lawn his horizontal beam.
 The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale;
 The thorny wilds the wood-men fierce assail:
 And foremost of the train, his cornel spear
 Ulysses wav'd, to rouse the savage war. 510
 Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
 A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood:
 Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thund'rous show'r,
 Nor solar ray, cou'd pierce the shady bow'r,
 With wither'd foliage strew'd, a heapy store! 515
 The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.
 Rous'd by the hounds and hunters mingling cries,
 The savage from his leafy shelter flies:
 With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine,
 And bristles high impale his horrid chine. 520

* Autolycus.

Young Ithacus advanc'd, defies the foe,
 Poising his lifted lance in act to throw ;
 The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
 And springs impetuous with opponent speed !
 His tusks oblique he aim'd, the knee to gore ; 525
 Aslope they glanc'd, the finewy fibres tore,
 And bar'd the bone : Ulysses undismay'd,
 Soon with redoubl'd force the wound repay'd ;
 To the right shoulder-joint the spear apply'd :
 His further flank with streaming purple dy'd : 530
 On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain ;
 With joy, and vast surprise, th' applauding train
 View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain. }
 With bandage firm Ulysses knee they bound ;
 Then chanting mystic lays, the closing wound 535
 Of sacred melody confess'd the force ;
 The tides of life regain'd their azure course.

v. 535. *Then chanting mystic lays, the closing wound
 Of sacred melody confess'd the force.*]

This is a remarkable instance of the antiquity of that idle superstition of curing wounds by incantation or charms : yet Homer is no way blameable for mentioning it ; he wrote according to the opinion of the age, which whether true or false vindicates him as a poet. Indeed almost all other poets have spoken more boldly than Homer of the power of incantations ; thus Virgil,

“ Carmina vel cœlo possunt deducere lunam,
 “ Carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulyssæi,
 “ Frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.”

But we may defend Homer from Pliny, who has thought this point, viz. whether charms are available physically, worthy of a serious discussion ; he refers to this passage in his Natural History, lib. xxviii. cap. i. “ Dixit Homerus profluvium sanguinis vulnerato femine Ulyssæm inhibuisse carmine : Theophrastus, Ischia-
 “ dicos sanare : Cato prodidit luxatis membris carmen auxiliari,
 “ Varro ; Podagris.” Attatus affirms, that if a man chance to spy a scorpion, and pronounce the word “ duo,” it will lie still, and never shoot his sting. I think these grave authors outdo even the fictions of poets ; and I hardly believe that any of them would have ventured to provoke a serpent trusting to the charm. But we are to understand this charm not merely as a form of words, but

Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim ;
 Autolycus, enamour'd with his fame,
 Confirm'd the cure : and from the Delphic dome 540
 With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
 He safe at Ithaca with joy receiv'd,
 Relates the chace, and early praise atchiev'd.

Deep o'er his knee in seam'd, remain'd the scar :
 Which noted token of the woodland war 545
 When Euryclea found, th' ablution ceas'd ;
 Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand releas'd ;
 The mingled fluids from the vase redound ;
 The vase reclining floats the floor around !
 Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife exprest 550
 Of grief, and joy, alternate in her breast.
 Her flutt'ring words in melting murmurs dy'd ;
 At length abrupt—my son !—my king !—she cry'd.

as joined with musical notes, and then it may appear more rational : for the cure of the sciatica, Theophrastus commends the Phrygian music, and A. Gellius for giving ease to it ; but adds, “ ut memoriæ proditum est.” Apollonius in his book de Miris, affirms from Theophrastus, that music cures many diseases both of mind and body, καθάπερ λειποθυμίας, φόβου, καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ μακρὸν γιγνομένας τῆς διανοίας ἐκστάσεις· ἴαται δὲ καταύλησις ἰσχυράδα καὶ ἐπιληψίαν. And the same author affirms, that many in his time, especially the Thebans, used the pipe for the cure of several sicknesses, which Galen calls καταυλεῖν τῷ τόπῳ, “ super loco affecto “ tibiâ canere ;” or “ loca dolentia decantare.” I will not affirm that such charms of music have no power in some maladies ; every one knows what an effect the harp of David had over the spirits of Saul ; but we have either lost, or not yet found out the art : a natural reason may be assigned for it ; for as the musical notes move the air, so the air moves the inward spirits, and the humours of the body, which are the seat of diseases ; so that by this new motion they may be condensed, rarified, dissipated or expelled, according as they are agitated or influenced by the concussion of the musical notes ; but however this be, if other poets may say that charms have power to stop the rivers in their courses, Homer is not to be condemned for ascribing the power of stopping blood to incantations. See Mr. Cowley's notes on the first book of his Davideis.

v. 553. —*abrupt—my son !—my king !—she cry'd.* It may seem incredible that this dialogue between Ulysses and Euryclea could be held in the presence of Penelope, and she not hear it : how

His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,
 Full on the queen her raptur'd eye she cast, 555
 Ardent to speak the monarch safe restor'd :
 But studious to conceal her royal lord,
 Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
 And from the present blifs abstracts her thought.
 His hand to Euryclea's he apply'd, 560
 Art thou foredoom'd my pest? the hero cry'd :
 Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd :
 And have the fates thy babbling age ordain'd }
 To violate the life thy youth sustain'd ?
 An exile have I told, with weeping eyes, 565
 Full twenty annual suns in distant skies :
 At length return'd, some god inspires thy breast
 To know thy king, and here I stand confest.
 'This heav'n-discover'd truth to thee consign'd,
 Reserve, the treasure of thy inmost mind : 570
 Else if the gods my vengeful arm sustain,
 And prostrate to my sword the suitor-train :
 With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age
 Shall bleed a victim to vindictive rage.

is this to be reconciled to probability? I will answer in the words of Eustathius: The poet, says he, is admirably guarded against this objection; it is for this reason that he mentions the falling of Ulysses's leg into the water, the sound of the vessel from that accident, the overturning of it, and the effusion of the water: all these different sounds may easily be supposed to drown the voice of Euryclea, so as it might not be heard by Penelope; it is true, she could not but observe this confusion that happened while Euryclea washes; but the age of Euryclea might naturally make her believe that all this happened by accident through her feebleness, and Penelope might be persuaded that it was thus occasioned, having no reason to suspect the truth: besides, what is more frequent on the theatre than to speak to the audience, while the persons on the stage are supposed not to hear? In reality, it is evident that Ulysses and Euryclea were at a proper distance from Penelope, probably out of decency while the feet were washing; for as soon as that office is over, Homer tells us that Ulysses drew nearer to the fire where Penelope sat, that he might resume the conference.

Αὐτίς ἀρ' ἀσσοτέρῳ πυρὸς ἔλκετο δίφρον Ὀδυσσεύς.

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear : 575
 What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe ?
 Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd ;
 With ribs of steel, and marble heart, immur'd.
 When heav'n, auspicious to thy right avow'd,
 Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-crowd ; 580
 The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair ;
 The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare.

Thy aid avails me not, the chief reply'd ;
 My own experience shall their doom decide ;
 A witness-judge precludes a long appeal : 585
 Suffice it thee thy monarch to conceal.

He said : obsequious with redoubl'd pace,
 She to the fount conveys th' exhausted vase :
 The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil
 With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil. 590
 Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,
 His former seat receiv'd the stranger guest ;
 Whom thus with pensive air the queen address. }

Tho' night, dissolving grief in grateful ease,
 Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize ; 595

v. 577. *Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd.*] Plutarch in his treatise upon Garrulity observes, that Ulysses and every person that had relation to him were remarkable for their taciturnity: they had all profited under so great a master of secrecy as Ulysses: it is practised by his wife, his son, and his nurse; his very companions, who attended him in his voyages, possessed this virtue in so eminent a degree as to suffer themselves to be dashed in pieces by the Cyclops, rather than discover him to that giant. The moral that we are to gather from this fable is, that the safety of princes counsels consists in secrecy. Dacier.

v. 590. *With plenteous unction* —] We are not to imagine that this custom of anointing the feet was an instance of luxury; it prevailed over the oriental world solely out of necessity, to avoid offensiveness in those hot regions. This custom prevailed many ages after Homer, and we have an instance of it in the woman who washed the feet of our Lord and Saviour with tears, and anointed them with oil. This place is a plain proof that oil was used after washing the feet as well as after bathing.

A-while, reluctant to her pleasing force,
 Suspend the restful hour with sweet discourse.
 The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy!)
 My menials, and domestic cares employ :
 And, unattended by sincere repose, 600
 The night afflicts my ever-wakeful woes :
 When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
 My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.
 As when the months are clad in flow'ry green,
 Sad Philomel, in bow'ry shades unseen, 605

v. 605. *Sad Philomel, &c.*] This passage is thus explained by Eustathius. The simile is not only introduced to express the sorrow of Penelope, but the nature of it : it is not so much intended to illustrate her grief, as her various agitations and different thoughts compared to the different accents in the mournful song of the nightingale ; for thus Homer applies it,

Ὡς καὶ ἐμὰ δῖχα θυμὸς ἐρύρεται ἐνθα καὶ ἐνθα.

Eustathius adds, that Homer relates this story very differently from later authors : he mentions nothing of Progne, Tereus, or Pandion, unless that name be the same with Pandareus ; Itylus likewise is by them called Itys. The story is thus, according to these writers : Philomela was the wife of Tereus king of Thrace, she had a sister named Progne, whom Tereus ravished and cut her tongue out, that she might not discover the crime to Philomela ; but Progne betrayed it by weaving the story in a piece of embroidery ; upon this Philomela slew her own son Itys or Itylus, and served up his flesh to the table of her husband Tereus ; which being made known to him, he pursues Philomela and Progne, who are feigned to be changed into birds for their swift flight into Athens, by which they escaped the revenge of Tereus. Philomela is fabled to be turned into a nightingale, and Progne into a swallow ; it being observed by Pausanias, that no swallow ever builds in Thrace, or nightingale is ever seen there, as hating the country of Tereus. But Homer follows a different history : Pandareus, son of Merops, had three daughters, Meropè, Cleothena, and Aëdon : Pandareus married his eldest daughter Aëdon to Zethus, brother of Amphion, mentioned in the eleventh Odyssey ; she had an only son named Itylus ; and being envious at the numerous family of her brother-in-law Amphion, she resolves to murder Amaleus the eldest of her nephews ; her own son Itylus was brought up with the children of Amphion, and lay in the same bed with this Amaleus. Aëdon directs her son Itylus to absent himself one night from the bed, but he forgets her orders ; at the time determined, she conveys

To vernal airs attunes her varied strains ;
 And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains :
 Young Itylus, his parents darling joy !
 Whom chance mislaid the mother to destroy :
 Now doom'd a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous boy. }
 So in nocturnal solitude forlorn, 611
 A sad variety of woes I mourn !
 My mind reflective, in a thorny maze
 Devious from care to care incessant strays.
 Now, wav'ring doubt succeeds to long despair ; 615
 Shall I my virgin-nuptial-vow revere ;
 And joining to my son's my menial train,
 Partake his councils, and assist his reign !
 Or, since mature in manhood, he deplores
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores ; 620
 Shall I, reluctant ! to his will accord ;
 And from the peers select the noblest lord ;
 So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
 These wasteful love-debates, a mourning bride ?
 A visionary thought I'll now relate, 625
 Illustrate, if you know, the shadow'd fate.

A team of twenty geese (a snow-white train !)
 Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
 Amuse my pensive hours. The bird of Jove
 Fierce from his mountain-eyrie downward drove ; 630
 Each fav'rite fowl he pounc'd with deathful fway,
 And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
 My pitying eyes effus'd a plenteous stream,
 To view their death thus imag'd in a dream :
 With tender sympathy to soothe my soul, 635
 A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole.

herself into the apartment, and murders her own son Itylus, by mistake, instead of her nephew Amaleus : upon this, almost in distraction, she begs the gods to remove her from the race of humankind ; they grant her prayer, and change her into a nightingale.

But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd:

Perch'd on the battlements he thus began,
(In form an eagle, but in voice a man.)

640

O queen! no vulgar vision of the sky
I come, prophetic of approaching joy:

View in this plummy form thy victor lord;

The geese (a glutton race) by thee delpor'd,

Portend the suitors fated to my sword.

645

This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceas'd.

When from the downy bands of sleep releas'd,

Fast by the limpid lake my swan-like train

I found, insatiate of the golden grain.

The vision self-explain'd (the chief replies)

650

Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies:

Ulysses speaks his own return decreed;

And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed.

Hard is the task, and rare, the queen rejoin'd,

Impending destinies in dreams to find:

655

Immur'd within the silent bow'r of sleep,

Two portals firm the various phantoms keep:

v. 656. *Immur'd within the silent bow'r of sleep, &c.*] This seems to be a bold fiction, and commentators have laboured hard to shew the reason of it: some imagine, that by the horn is meant a tunic of the eye, which is called horny; and that the ivory represents the teeth; and that by these allusions the poet intended to express that what we hear spoken may be false, but what we see must infallibly be true: that is, according to this fable, the ivory gate emits falsehood, that of horn, truth. Others explain Homer by referring to the nature of horn and ivory, horn being pervious to the sight, and ivory impenetrable. Dacier, from Eustathius, gives us a very different solution; by horn, which is transparent, Homer means the air, or heavens which are translucent; by ivory, he denotes the earth which is gross and opaque: thus the dreams which come from the earth, that is, through the gate of ivory, are false; those from heaven, or through the gate of horn, true. But it may be thought that there are no grounds, from the words of Homer, for such an interpretation. I imagine that this fable is built upon a real foundation, and that there were places called the gates of falsehood and truth: Diodorus Siculus, in his

Of iv'ry one; whence flit to mock the brain,
 Of winged lies a light fantastic train:
 The gate oppos'd pellucid valves adorn, 660
 And columns fair incas'd with polish'd horn:
 Where images of truth for passage wait,
 With visions manifest of future fate.
 Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,
 Which spoke Ulysses to his realm restor'd: 665
 Delusive semblance! ——— But my remnant life
 Heav'n shall determine in a gameful strife:
 With that fam'd bow Ulysses taught to bend,
 For me the rival archers shall contend.
 As on the list'd field he us'd to place 670
 Six beams, oppos'd to fix in equal space:
 Elanc'd a-far by his unerring art,
 Sure thro' fix circlets flew the whizzing dart.
 So, when the sun reffores the purple day,
 Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay: 675
 To him the spousal honour is decreed,
 Who thro' the rings directs the feather'd reed.
 Torn from these walls where long the kinder pow'rs
 With pomp and joy have wing'd my youthful hours!

second book, describing the ceremonies concerning the dead, mentions the gates of oblivion, of hatred and lamentation; and then adds, that there are other gates in the same place; namely, in Memphis in Ægypt, that are called the gates of verity, near which there is a statue of justice without an head; now Homer in the twenty-fourth Odyssey places the region of dreams in the way to the infernal shades, and it is past dispute that he borrows all these fables of Styx, Cocytus, (that is, of the gates of hatred, lamentation,) &c. from Ægypt, and places them in hell, after Orpheus, who adapted all his ceremonies according to the rites of burial observed at Memphis, as Diodorus fully proves: if therefore he borrows the fable of the gates of oblivion, &c. from Ægypt, why may he not the story of the gates of falsehood and verity? especially since he takes his whole relation concerning hell from the customs of the Ægyptians, and this region of dreams is placed by him in the passage to hell: it may therefore not be impossible but this story of the gates of sleep, may have a real foundation, and be built upon the customs of the Ægyptians.

On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam;
 The pleasure past supplies a copious theme 681
 For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful
 dream!

Propose the sportive lot, the chief replies,
 Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer's prize:
 Ulysses will surprise th' unfinish'd game 685
 Avow'd, and falsify the suitors claim.

To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin'd:
 In all thy speech what pleasing force I find!
 O'er my suspended woe thy words prevail,
 I part reluctant from the pleasing tale. 690
 But heav'n that knows what all terrestrials need,
 Repose to night, and toil to day decreed:
 Grateful vicissitude! Yet me withdrawn,
 Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn
 Establish'd use enjoins; to rest and joy 695
 Estrang'd, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy!
 Meantime instructed is the menial tribe
 Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.

Thus affable, her bow'r the queen ascends;
 The sov'reign step a beauteous train attends; 700
 There imag'd to her soul Ulysses rose;
 Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows:
 'Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
 And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

THE ARGUMENT.

While Ulysses lies in the vestibule of the palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women. Minerva comforts him and casts him asleep. At his awaking he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted. The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people, and the suitors banquet in the palace. Telemachus exerts his authority amongst them, notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesippus, and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the woers.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed:
(The remnants of the spoil the suitor-crowd
In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd.)
Then o'er the chief, Eurynome the chaste
With duteous care a downy carpet cast:
With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
And ruminating wrath, he scorns repose.

As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey,
Whilst to nocturnal joys impure, repair
With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.

v. 12. *With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.*] Eustathius expatiates upon the conduct of these female servants of Penelope. Silence and a decent reserve (remarks that author) is the ornament of the fair sex; levity and laughter betray them into an unguarded

His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
Wav'ring his thoughts in dubious balance hung

behaviour, and make them susceptible of wanton impressions. The Athenians, as Pausanias informs us, had a temple sacred to love and Venus the whisperer. Venus was called the whisperer (*ψιθυριστής*) because they who there offered up their prayers applied their mouths to the ear of the statue of that goddess, and whispered their petitions; an intimation, that women ought to govern their tongue, and not let it transgress either by loudness or loquacity. But this no ways affects the ladies of Great-Britain; they speak so well, they should never be silent.

Ulysses, Homer tells us, is almost provoked to kill these females with his own hands: this has been imagined a thought unworthy an hero. The like objection has been made against Æneas in Virgil (*Æneid*, lib. ii. v. 567.)

Thus, wand'ring in my way, without a guide,
The graceless Helen in the porch I 'spy'd
Of Vesta's temple: there she lurk'd alone,
Muff'd she sat, and what she could, unknown;
'Trembling with rage, the strumpet I regard,
Resolv'd to give her guilt the due reward.

This whole passage is said to have been expunged from Virgil by Tucca and Varius; for as Virgil there expresses it,

'Tis true a soldier can small honour gain,
And boast no conquest from a woman slain. Dryden.

But the objection is probably made with too great severity, both against Homer and Virgil: it is no disgrace to the best or bravest man, to be subject to such passions as betray him into no unworthy actions: a hero is not supposed to be insensible; he distinguishes himself as such, if he restrains them within the bounds of reason. Both Æneas and Ulysses are fired with a just indignation; and this is agreeable to human nature; but both of them proceed to no outrageous action, and this shews that their passions are governed by superiour reason. However this resentment of Ulysses is less liable to objection than that of Æneas: Ulysses subdues his indignation by the reflection of his own reason; but Virgil introduces a machine to compose the spirit of Æneas:

———— all shining heav'nly bright,
My mother stood reveal'd before my sight,
She held my hand, the destin'd blow to break, &c.

It may be further added that the case is very different between Æneas and Ulysses. The persons whom Ulysses intends to punish are his subjects and servants, and such a punishment would be no

Or, instant should he quench the guilty flame 15
 With their own blood, and intercept the shame;
 Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
 And let the peers consummate the disgrace;
 Round his swell'd heart the murmurous fury rolls;
 As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls, 20
 And bays the stranger-groom: so wrath compest
 Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.
 Poor suffer'd heart! he cry'd, support the pain
 Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.

more than an act of justice, as he is their master and king; and we find in the sequel of the *Odyssey* that he actually inflicts it. It should therefore be thought an instance of Homer's judgment, in painting the disorders of these servants in such strong colours, that we may acknowledge the justice, when he afterwards brings them to punishment.

v. 20. *As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls, &c.*] This in the original is a very bold expression, but Homer, to soften it, instances a comparison which reconciles us to it. Ennius has literally translated it, as Spondanus observes:

“ ——— animusque in pectore latrat.”

That is, word for word,

———— Κραδὴν δὲ οἱ ἔνδον ὑλάκλει.

The similitude itself is very expressive; as the mastiff barks to guard her young, so labours the soul of Ulysses in defence of his son and wife, Penelope and Telemachus. Dacier was afraid that the comparison could not be rendered with any beauty in the French tongue, and therefore has substituted another in the room of it, “Son cœur rugissoit au dedans de luy, comme un lion rugit autour d’une bergerie, où il ne sçauroit entrer.” But however more noble the lion may be than the mastiff, it is evident that she utterly deviates from the allusion: the mastiff rages in defence of her young, Ulysses of his son Telemachus; but how is this represented by a lion roaring round a fold, which he is not to defend, but destroy? We have therefore chosen to follow Homer in the more humble but more expressive similitude; and what will entirely reconcile us to it, is the great honour which was paid to dogs by the ancients: they were kept as a piece of state by princes or heroes, and therefore a comparison drawn from them was held to be as noble as if it had been drawn from a lion.

v. 23. *Poor suffer'd heart! he cry'd, support the pain
 Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.*]

Not fiercer woes thy fortitude cou'd foil, 25
 When the brave partners of thy ten years toil
 Dire Polypheme devour'd: I then was freed
 By patient prudence, from the death decreed.

Thus anchor'd safe on reason's peaceful coast,
 Tempests of wrath his soul no longer tost; 30
 Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd:
 As one who long with pale-ey'd famine pin'd,

These two verses are quoted by Plato in his *Phædo*, where he treats of the soul's immortality: he makes use of them to prove that Homer understood the soul to be un compounded and distinct from the body. "If the soul, argues that author, were a compounded substance, if it were harmony, (as some philosophically assert) she would never act discordantly from the parts which compose it; but we see the contrary, we see the soul guide and govern the parts of which she herself is pretended to be composed; she resists, threatens and restrains our passions, our fears, avarice and anger: in short, the soul speaks to the body as to a substance of a nature entirely different from its own. Homer therefore evidently understood that the soul ought to govern and direct the passions, and that it is of a nature more divine than harmony."

This is undoubtedly very just reasoning; and there is an expression, observes Dacier, that bears the same import in the holy scriptures: "The heart of David smote him when he numbered the people." There is this difference; in Homer by "heart" is understood the corporeal substance, in the scriptures the spiritual; but both make a manifest distinction between the soul and the body.

v. 32. *As one who long, &c.*] No passage in the whole *Odyssæy* has fallen under more ridicule than this comparison; Monsieur Perrault is particularly severe upon it: Homer (says that critic) compares Ulysses turning in his bed to a black-pudding broiling on a gridiron; whereas the truth is, he compares that hero turning and tossing in his bed, burning with impatience to satisfy himself with the blood of the suitors, to a man in sharp hunger preparing the entrails of a victim over a great fire; and the agitation represents the agitation of Ulysses. Homer compares not the thing, but the persons.

Boileau, in his notes upon Longinus, answers this objection. It is notorious that the belly of some animals was one of the most delicious dishes amongst the antients: that the "fumen" or sow's belly was boasted of for its excellence by the Romans, and forbidden by a sumptuary law as too voluptuous. Besides the Greek word used to express a black-pudding was not invented in the days of Homer. Ogilby indeed thus renders it;

The fav'ry cates on glowing embers cast
 Incessant turns, impatient for repast;
 Ulysses so, from side to side devolv'd,
 In self-debate the suitors doom resolv'd. 35

When in the form of mortal nymph array'd,
 From heav'n descends the Jove-born martial maid;
 And hov'ring o'er his head in view confests'd,
 The goddess thus her fav'rite care address'd. 40

Oh thou, of mortals most inur'd to woes!
 Why roll those eyes unfriended of repose?
 Beneath thy palace roof forget thy care;
 Blest in thy queen! blest in thy blooming heir!
 Whom, to the gods when suppliant fathers bow, 45
 They name the standard of their dearest vow.

As one a pudding broiling on the coals.

But you will ask, Is not the allusion mean at best, and does it not convey a low image? Monsieur Dacier answers in the negative, in his notes upon Aristotle's Poetics. The comparison is borrowed from sacrifices which yielded blood and fat, and was therefore so far from being despicable, that it was looked upon with veneration by antiquity. Lib. i. of the Iliad.

On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from every part.

The "cawls" and the "choicest morsels" were the fat of the victim, selected as the best part of it, to be offered to the gods. We may find that the thought was noble in the oriental language, for the author of Ecclesiasticus makes use of it, xlvii. 2. "As is the fat taken from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the children of Israel." And the same allusion which was used to represent the worth and excellence of David, could be no degradation to Ulysses.

But what is understood by the "belly of the beast, full of fat and blood?" Boileau is of opinion that those words denote the fat and the blood which are in those parts of an animal naturally: but he is in an error, as appears evidently from these lines, lib. xviii. of the Odyssey.

Γαστέρες αἱ δ' αἰγῶν κέατ' ἐν πυρί· τὰς δ' ἐπὶ δόρπῳ
 Κατθέμεθα, κνίσσης τε καὶ αἵματι· ἐμπλήσαντες.

"Implentes sanguine & pinguedine, in cœnâ deponamus;" a demonstration that Homer intends not the natural fat and blood of the animal.

Just is thy kind reproach, (the chief rejoin'd)
 Deeds full of fate distract my various mind,
 In contemplation wrapp'd. This hostile crew
 What single arm hath prowess to subdue? 50
 Or if by Jove's, and thy auxiliar aid,
 They're doom'd to bleed; O say, celestial maid:
 Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain,
 Nations embattled to revenge the slain?

Oh impotence of faith! Minerva cries, 55
 If man on frail unknowing man relies,
 Doubt you the gods? Lo Pallas' self descends,
 Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.
 In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast,
 Tho' myriads leagu'd thy rightful claim contest: 60
 My sure divinity shall bear the shield,
 And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.

v. 56. *If man on frail unknowing man relies,
 Doubt you the gods? —*]

There is excellent reasoning in this, if a friend whom we know to be wise and powerful, advises us, we are ready to follow his instructions; the Divine Being gives us his counsel, and we refuse it. Monsieur Dacier observes that Epictetus had this passage in his view, and beautified his morality with it. "The protection of a prince or potentate (says that author) gives us full tranquillity, and banishes from us all uneasy apprehension. We have an all-powerful Being for our protector, and for our father; and yet the knowledge of it is not sufficient to drive away our fears, inquietudes, and discontents."

What Homer further puts into the mouth of the goddess of wisdom is consonant to sacred verity, and agrees with the language of the scripture; Psalm xxvii. 3. "Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid."

The poet almost in every book mentions the destruction of the suitors by the single hand of Ulysses, to reconcile us to it by degrees, that we may not be shocked at the great catastrophe of the poem as incredible: it is particularly judicious to insist upon it in this place in a manner so solemn, to prepare us for the approaching event. If the destruction of the suitors should appear humanly improbable by being ascribed solely to Ulysses, it is at least reconcileable to divine probability, and becomes credible through the intervention of a goddess.

Now, pay the debt to craving nature due,
 Her faded pow'rs with balmy rest renew.
 She ceas'd: ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes;
 His care dissolves in visionary joys:
 The goddess pleas'd, regains her natal skies.

65 }

Not so the queen; the downy bands of sleep
 By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to weep:
 A gloomy pause ensu'd of dumb despair;
 Then thus her fate invok'd, with fervent pray'r.

70

Diana! speed thy deathful ebon-dart,
 And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.
 Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! far from human race,
 Tost thro' the void illimitable space:

75

Or if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
 Me with his whelming wave let ocean shroud!
 So, Pandarus, thy hopes, three orphan-fair
 Were doom'd to wander thro' the devious air;
 Thyself untimely and thy consort dy'd,
 But four celestials both your cares supply'd.

80

v. 72. *Diana! speed thy deathful ebon-dart, &c.*] I doubt not but the reader will be pleased with the beauty of this soliloquy. There is an assemblage of tender images and moving complaints, and yet they are such as betray no meanness of spirit: the lamentation of Penelope is the lamentation of a queen and heroine; she mourns, but it is with dignity. The poet makes a good use of her sorrows, and they excellently sustain her character of persevering to elude the addresses of the suitors, when she wishes even to die rather than to yield to them.

But I confess the inserting so many particularities of the daughters of Pandarus, &c. greatly lessens the pathetic of this speech.

v. 74. *Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! &c.*] The ancients (says Dacier) were persuaded that some persons were carried away by storms and whirlwinds. I would rather imagine such expressions to be entirely figurative and poetical; it is probable that what gave occasion to these fictions might be no more than the sudden deaths of some persons, and their disappearance was ascribed, in the language of poetry, to storms and whirlwinds. The orientals delighted in such bold figures. Job xxvii. 21. "The east wind carrieth him away, and as a storm hurleth him out of his place." And Isaiah xli. 16. "The wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them."

Venus in tender delicacy rears
 With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years:
 Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic, and sagacious mind: 85
 With shapely growth Diana grac'd the bloom;
 And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.
 But whilst to learn their lots in nuptial love,
 Bright Cytherea fought the bow'r of Jove;
 (The god supreme, to whose eternal eye 90
 The registers of fate expanded lie)
 Wing'd harpies snatch'd th' unguarded charge away,
 And to the Furies bore a grateful prey.

v. 82. *Venus in tender delicacy rears
 With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years.]*

Monsieur Dacier observes upon this passage; Venus is said to feed these infants with wine, milk, and honey; that is, she nursed them in their infancy, with plenty and abundance. For this is the import of the expression: a land flowing with milk and honey means a land of the greatest fertility, as is evident from the writings of Moses. So the prophet. "Butter and honey shall he eat, till he knows how to refuse the evil and chuse the good;" that is, till the age of discretion.

v. 84. *Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic, and sagacious mind.]*

It may seem that Homer ascribes improper gifts to this goddess; wisdom is the portion of Minerva, beauty of Venus, why then are they here ascribed to Juno? Spondanus calls this an insolvable difficulty. Dacier explains it by saying, that the beauty of princesses is different from that of persons of an inferiour station, their beauty consists in a majesty that is every way great and noble, and strikes with awe, very different from the little affectations and formal softnesses of inferiour beauty; the former kind is the gift of Venus to the lower part of the fair sex, the latter is bestowed on princesses and queens, by Juno the regent of the skies

v. 92. *Wing'd harpies snatch'd th' unguarded charge away.]* It is not evident what is meant by these princesses being carried away by the harpies: Eustathius thinks that they wandered from their own country, and fell into the power of cruel governesses, whose severities the poet ascribes to the ἐρίνυες, or Furies. Dacier imagines, that these two princesses having seen the unhappy fate of their sister Aëdon (who was married to Zethus, and slew her own son) feared a like calamity, and dreading marriage, retired to

Be such my lot! Or thou Diana speed
 Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead: 95
 To seek my lord among the warriour-train,
 Ere second vows my bridal faith profane.
 When woes the waking sense alone assail;
 Whilst night extends her soft oblivious veil,
 Of other wretches care the torture ends: 100
 No truce the warfare of my heart suspends!
 The night renews the day-distracting theme,
 And airy terrors sable ev'ry dream.
 The last alone a kind illusion wrought,
 And to my bed my lov'd Ulysses brought, 105
 In manly bloom, and each majestic grace,
 As when for Troy he left my fond embrace;
 Such raptures in my beating bosom rise,
 I deem it sure a vision of the skies.

Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne,
 In audible laments she breathes her moan; 111

some distant solitude, where never being heard of, it gave room for the fiction. It must be allowed that the thought excellently agrees with the wishes of Penelope: these princesses were taken away at the point of their marriage; Penelope believes herself to be in the same condition, and wishes to be lost rather than submit to second nuptials. This speech has a further effect; we find Penelope reduced to the utmost exigency, she has no further subterfuge; the poet therefore judiciously paints this exigency in the strongest colours, to shew the necessity of unravelling the intrigue of the poem in the conclusion of the *Odyssey*.

v. 107. *As when for Troy he left my fond embrace.*] This little circumstance is not without a good effect: it shews that the whole soul of Penelope was possessed with the image of Ulysses. Homer adds, "such as he was when he sailed to Troy;" which is inserted to take off our wonder that she should not discover him; this Ulysses in disguise is not like the Ulysses she formerly knew, and now delineates in her imagination. Eustathius.

v. 110. *Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne.*] This is the morning of the fortieth day; for part of the eighteenth book, and the whole nineteenth, and so far of the twentieth book, contain no more time than the evening of the thirty-ninth day.

The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear;
 Mis-judging of the cause, a sudden fear
 Of his arrival known, the chief alarms;
 He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms. 115

Up-springing from his couch, with active haste
 The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd;
 (The hide, without, imbib'd the morning air)
 And thus the gods invok'd, with ardent pray'r.

Jove, and ethereal thrones! with heav'n to friend
 If the long series of my woes shall end; 121
 Of human race now rising from repose,
 Let one a blissful omen here disclose;

v. 113. ————— a sudden fear
 Of his arrival known, the chief alarms.]

I was at a loss for an explication of this line, till I found it in Eustathius; for why should Ulysses imagine that Penelope knew him to be Ulysses, after a speech that expressed so much concern for his absence? Ulysses having only heard the voice, not distinguished the words of her lamentation, mistakes the tears of Penelope for tears of joy; he suspects that the discovery is made by Euryclea or Telemachus; that they have told her the truth to give her comfort; and fears lest in the transport of her joy she should act something that would betray him to the suitors, and prevent his designs: he therefore immediately withdraws, and makes a prayer to heaven for a sign to re-assure his hopes, that he may proceed with confidence to their destruction.

v. 120. Jove, and ethereal thrones —————
 123. ————— a blissful omen —————]

The construction in the Greek is ungrammatical, for after Ζεῦ πάτερ in the singular, the poet immediately adds εἰ μ' ἐθέλοντες in the plural number; τὰ λοιπὰ δαιμόνια are implied, says Eustathius, so that θεοὶ is understood, which rectifies the construction.

The reader will fully understand the import of this prayer, from the nature of omens, and the notions of them amongst the antients: "If, says Ulysses, my prayer is heard, let there be a voice from within the palace to certify me of it;" and immediately a voice is heard, "O Jupiter, may this day be the last to the suitors!" Such speeches as fell accidentally from any person were held ominous, and one of the antient ways of divination; Ulysses understands it as such, and accepts the omen. It was in

And to confirm my faith, propitious Jove!

Vouchsafe the sanction of a sign above.

125

Whilst lowly thus the chief adoring bows,

The pitying god his guardian aid avows.

Loud from a sapphire sky his thunder sounds:

With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.

Soon, with consummate joy to crown his pray'r, 130

An omen'd voice invades his ravish'd ear.

use among the Romans, as appears from Tully of divination, when P. Æmilius was going to war with Perseus king of the Macedonians, he found his little daughter in tears: "O father," says she, "Perseus is dead!" meaning her little dog named Perseus; Æmilius immediately replied, "O daughter, I embrace the omen," applying it to Perseus king of the Macedonians; who was afterwards conquered by him, and died a captive in Rome. The same practice was used by the Hebrews, it was called Bath Kol; this is an instance of it: two rabbies desiring to see Samuel a Babylonish doctor, "let us follow," said they, "the hearing of Bath Kol;" travelling therefore near a school, they heard a boy reading these words out of 1 Sam. xxv. 1. "And Samuel died." They observed it, and found that their friend was dead. The Sortes Virgilianæ afterwards were much of this kind.

v. 128. *Loud from a sapphire sky* ———] It was this circumstance, of thunder bursting from a "serene sky," that made it ominous: it was noted as such amongst the Romans in the books of the augurs; and Horace brings it as a proof against the opinions of Epicurus,

" ————— Diespiter

" Igni corrusco nubila dividens,

" Plerumque per purum tonantes

" Egit equos, volucremque currum."

Virgil likewise speaks of thunder as ominous: when Anchises saw the lambent flame round the head of Iulus, he prays to Jupiter, and immediately it thunders.

" Vix ea fatus erat senior, subitoque fragore

" Intonuit."

The Stoics drew an argument from thunder from a serene air, against the doctrines of Epicurus, who taught that the gods had no regard of human affairs; for they concluded such thunder to be præter-natural, and an argument of a divine providence.

Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
 Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind;
 Task'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
 From the pure flour (the growth and strength of man)
 Discharging to the day the labour due, 136
 Now early to repose the rest withdrew;
 One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
 Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind;
 And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd. 140 }

Father of gods and men; whose thunders roll
 O'er the cerulean vault, and shake the pole;
 Whoe'er from heav'n has gain'd this rare ostent,
 (Of granted vows a certain signal sent)
 In this blest moment of accepted pray'r 145
 Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care!
 Instant, O Jove! confound the suitor-train,
 For whom o'er-toil'd I grind the golden grain:
 Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast,
 And be this festival decreed their last! 150

Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
 Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
 Meantime the menial train with unctuous wood
 Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian food:
 When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir; 155
 With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
 A radiant fabre grac'd his purple zone,
 And on his foot the golden sandal shone.

v. 133. *Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind.*] This little particularity shews us the great profusion of the suitors, who employed twelve mills to find them bread. There is a particular energy in the word ἐπερρώοντο; it denotes the great labour and assiduity of these people in preparing the bread, and consequently the great waste of the suitors. It likewise preserves a piece of antiquity, that kings formerly had mills in their palaces to provide for their families, and that these mills were attended by women; I suppose because preparing bread was an household care, and therefore fell to the lot of female servants.

His steps impetuous to the portal press'd;
And Euryclea thus he there address'd. 160

Say thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
Was care for due refection, and repose,
Bestow'd the stranger guest? Or waits he griev'd,
His age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd?
Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers; 165
(In woes bewilder'd, oft' the wisest errs.)
The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
And modest worth with noble scorn retires.

She thus: O cease that ever honour'd name
To blemish now; it ill deserves your blame: 170
A bowl of gen'rous wine suffic'd the guest;
In vain the queen the night-refection prest;
Nor would he court repose in downy state,
Unblest'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate!
A hide beneath the portico was spread, 175
And fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed:
A downy carpet cast with duteous care,
Secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.

His cornel jav'lin pois'd, with regal port,
To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court, 180

v. 165. *Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers.*] This speech of Telemachus may seem to be wanting in filial respect, as it appears to condemn the conduct of his mother: but (remarks Eustathius) the contrary is to be gathered from it. His blame is really a commendation; it shews that her affection was so great for Ulysses, that she received every vagrant honourably, who deceived her with false news about him; and that other persons who brought no tidings of him, though men of great worth, were less acceptable.

v. 180. *To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court,
Forth-issuing from the dome the prince repair'd.*]

It was customary for kings and magistrates to go early every morning into the public assemblies, to distribute justice, and take care of public affairs: but this assembly contributing nothing to the action of the *Odyssey*, the poet passes it over in a cursory manner, without any enlargement. Eustathius.

Forth-issuing from the dome the prince repair'd :
 Two dogs of chace, a lion-hearted guard,
 Behind him sourly stalk'd. Without delay
 The dame divides the labour of the day ;
 Thus urging to the toil the menial train. 185 }
 What marks of luxury the marble stain !
 Its wonted lustre let the floor regain ;
 The seats with purple clothe in order due ;
 And let th' absterfive sponge the board renew :
 Let some refresh the vase's fullied mold ; 190
 Some bid the goblets boast their native gold :
 Some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,
 And copious waters pure for bathing bear :
 Dispatch ! for soon the suitors will assay
 The lunar feast-rites to the god of day. 195

v. 189. *And let th' absterfive sponge the board renew.*] The table was not antiently covered with linnen, but carefully cleansed with wet sponges. Thus Arrian, ἄρον τὰς τραπέζας, Σπόγγισον: And Martial :

“ Hæc tibi sorte datur tergendis spongia mensis.”

They made use of no napkins to wipe their hands, but the soft and fine part of the bread, which they called ἀπομαγδαλίας, which afterwards they threw to the dogs; this custom is mentioned in the *Odyssey*, lib. x.

Ὡς δ' ὅταν ἀμφὶ ἀνακλῖα κύνες δαίτηθεν ἰόντα
 Σαίνουσ', αἰεὶ γὰρ τε φέρει μελίγμαλα θυμῷ.

As from some feast a man returning late,
 His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,
 Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive,
 Such as the good man ever wont to give.

The morsel in the translation, and the μελίγμαλα in the Greek, mean these pieces of bread, or ἀπομαγδαλίας, with which the antients wiped their hands after eating, and then threw to the dogs.

v. 195. *The lunar feast-rites to the god of day.*] This was the last day of one month, and the first of the following: the Greek months were lunar, the first day of every month was a day of great solemnity, and it was consecrated to Apollo, the author and fountain of light. Ulysses had said, lib. xiv. v. 186.

She said; with duteous haste a bevy fair
 Of twenty virgins to the spring repair:
 With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
 Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.
 Some wield the sounding ax; the dodder'd oaks 200
 Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.

Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
 (Eumæus in their train) the maids return.
 Three porkers for the feast, all brawny-chin'd,
 He brought; the choicest of the tusky kind: 205

In lodgements first secure his care he view'd,
 Then to the king this friendly speech renew'd:
 Now say sincere, my guest! the suitor-train
 Still treat they worth with lordly dull disdain;
 Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane? }

Some pitying god (Ulysses sad reply'd) 211
 With vollied vengeance blast their tow'ring pride!
 No conscious blush, no sense of right restrains
 The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins:
 From vice to vice their appetites are tost, 215
 All cheaply fated at another's cost!

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
 Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
 The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
 Spontaneous to the suitors feast preferr'd: 220
 Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound;
 With quav'ring cries the vaulted roofs resound:

Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,
 His antient realms Ulysses shall survey;
 In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn.

Τοῦ μὲν φθίνοντος μηνὸς, τῆ δ' ἱσαμένοιο.

This, says Solon in Plutarch, means that Ulysses shall return on the last day of the month precisely; and here we find it verified. Ulysses discovers himself upon this day, and kills the suitors: by his return, in the foregoing period, is meant his discovery; for he was returned when he made that assertion to Eumæus. It is therefore probable that the above recited verse was rightly interpreted by Solon.

And to the chief austere, aloud began
The wretch unfriendly to the race of man.

Here, vagrant, still? offensive to my lords! 225
Blows have more energy than airy words;
These arguments I'll use: nor conscious shame,
Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
A plenteous board! Hence! seek another host! 230

Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd,
But shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.

From Cephalenia cross the surgy main
Philæti^{us} late arriv'd, a faithful swain.
A steer ungrateful to the bull's embrace, 235
And goats he brought; the pride of all their race;
Imported in a shallop not his own:
The dome re-echo'd to their mingled moan.
Straight to the guardian of the bristly kind
He thus began, benevolent of mind. 240

What guest is he, of such majestic air?
His lineage and paternal clime declare:
Dim thro' th' eclipse of fate, the rays divine
Of sov'reign state with faded splendour shine.
If monarchs by the gods are plung'd in woe, 245
To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go!
Then affable he thus the chief address'd,
Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd.

v. 237. *Imported in a shallop* —] To understand this passage, it is necessary to remember that Melanthius and Philæti^{us} fed their flocks and herds in Cephalenia, an adjacent island, under the dominion of Ulysses; but living in different parts of it, they are brought over in separate vessels, by different ferrymen, *πορθμῆες*, as Homer expresses it.

v. 245. *If monarchs by the gods, &c.*] This is the reasoning of Philæti^{us}: kings are in a peculiar manner the care of the gods; and if the gods exempt not kings from calamities, how can inferior persons (says Dacier) expect to be exempted, or complain in the day of adversity? But I persuade myself the words have a deeper sense, and mean Ulysses; "Well may vagrants suffer, when kings, such as Ulysses, are not free from afflictions."

Stranger! may fate a milder aspect shew,
 And spin thy future with a whiter clue! 230
 O Jove! for ever deaf to human cries;
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies!
 Unpiteous of the race thy will began!
 The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,
 With penury, contempt, repulse, and care, 255
 The galling load of life is doom'd to bear.
 Ulysses from his state a wand'rer still,
 Upbraids thy pow'r, thy wisdom, or thy will:
 O monarch ever dear!—O man of woe!—
 Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow! 260

v. 251. *O Jove! for ever deaf to human cries;
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies!]*

These words are to be ascribed to the excess of sorrow which Philæti-
 us feels for the sufferings of Ulysses; for they certainly trans-
 gress the bounds of reason. But if we consider the state of theo-
 logy in Homer's time, the sentence will appear less offensive;
 "How can Jupiter (says Philæti-
 us) who is our father, throw
 his children into such an abyss of misery? Thou, oh Jove, hast
 made us, yet hast no compassion when we suffer." It is no
 easy matter to answer this argument from the heathen theology,
 and no wonder therefore if it confounds the reason of Philæti-
 us; but we who have certain hopes of a future state, can readily solve
 the difficulty: that state will be a time of retribution; it will
 amply recompense the good man for all his calamities, or as Mil-
 ton expresses,

Will justify the ways of God to men.

It may be observed in general, that this introduction of Philæti-
 us and his speech, so warm in the cause of Ulysses, is inserted here
 with admirable judgment: the poet intends to make use of his
 assistance in the destruction of the suitors; he therefore brings him
 in giving Ulysses full assurance of his fidelity; so that when that
 hero reveals himself to him, he does not depart from his cautious
 character, being before certified of his honesty.

I will only add, that Philæti-
 us is not to be looked upon as a
 common servant, but as an officer of state and dignity; and what-
 ever has been said in these annotations concerning Eumæus may
 be applied to Philæti-
 us; he is here called ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν, a title
 of honour, and Ulysses promises to marry him into his own fa-
 mily in the sequel of the Odyssey; consequently he is a personage
 worthy to be an actor in epic poetry.

v. 260. *Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow!]* The words

Like thee, poor stranger guest, deny'd his home!
 Like thee, in rags obscene decreed to roam!
 Or haply perish'd on some distant coast,
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost!
 O, grateful for the good his bounty gave, 265
 I'll grieve, 'till sorrow sink me to the grave!
 His kind protecting hand my youth preferr'd,
 The regent of his Cephallenian herd:
 With vast increase beneath my care it spreads,
 A stately breed! and blackens far the meads. 270
 Constrain'd, the choicest heeves I thence import,
 To cram these cormorants that crowd his court:
 Who in partition seek his realm to share;
 Nor human right, nor wrath divine revere.
 Since here resolv'd oppressive these reside, 275
 Contending doubts my anxious heart divide:
 Now to some foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
 And with the royal herd protection buy:
 Then happier thoughts return the nodding scale,
 Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail: 280

in the original are ἴδιον ὡς ἐνόησα, and they are very differently explained by Dacier and Eustathius. Ἰδιον, τῷτ' ἐστὶν ἰδρωσα, ἡδωνίασα, "I have sweated and been in an agony at the thought of the severe dispensations of Jupiter;" this is the interpretation of Eustathius. Dacier takes ἴδιον to be an adjective, and then it must be connected with the preceding period.

Οὐκ ἐλεαίρεις ἄνδρας, ἐπὶν δὴ γείνεαι αἰτὸς,
 Μισγέμεναι κακότητι, καὶ ἄλγεσι λευγαλέοισι,
 Ἰδιον ὡς ἐνόησα.

"Ut privatim, vel domestico admonitus sum exemplo," for so we may render ἴδιον, meaning Ulysses; then the sense will be this: "Jupiter, though thou hast made us, thou hast no compassion upon mankind, thou castest us into evils and misery; as I have learned by a private or domestic instance, namely in the person of Ulysses." If my judgment were of any weight, I should recommend this interpretation rather than that of Eustathius, which seems to be a forced one, and I remember no instance of this nature in Homer; but the preference is submitted to the reader's decision.

In op'ning prospects of ideal joy,
My king returns; the proud usurpers die.

To whom the chief: in thy capacious mind
Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd;
Attend a deed already ripe in fate: 285
Attest, oh Jove! the truth I now relate!
This sacred truth attest each genial pow'r,
Who blest the board, and guard this friendly bow'r!
Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
Thy wish produc'd in act, with pleas'd survey, 290
Thy wond'ring eyes shall view: his rightful reign
By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
And to the shades devote the suitor-train. }

O Jove supreme, the raptur'd swain replies,
With deeds consummate soon the promis'd joys! 295
These aged nerves, with new-born vigour strung,
In that blest cause shou'd emulate the young—
Assents Eumæus to the pray'r address;
And equal ardours fire his loyal breast.

Meantime the suitors urge the prince's fate, 300
And deathful arts employ the dire debate:
When in his airy tour, the bird of Jove
Truss'd with his finewy pounce a trembling dove;
Sinister to their hope! This omen ey'd
Amphinomus, who thus presaging cry'd. 305

The gods from force and fraud the prince defend;
O peers! the sanguinary scheme suspend:
Your future thought let fable fate employ;
And give the present hour to genial joy.

v. 305. *Amphinomus, who thus presaging cry'd.*] It may be asked why Amphinomus gives this interpretation to the prodigy? and why might not the eagle denote the suitors, and the pigeon Telemachus? No doubt but such an interpretation would have been specious, but contrary to the rules of augury. The eagle is the king of birds, and must therefore of necessity denote the chief personage, and could only be applied to Ulysses, or Telemachus. Amphinomus thus interprets it, and the suitors acquiesce in this interpretation.

From council straight th' assenting peerage ceas'd,
 And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast. 311
 Dis-rob'd, their vests apart in order lay,
 Then all with speed succinct the victims slay:
 With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,
 And the proud steer was on the marble spread. 315
 With fire prepar'd they deal the morsels round,
 Wine rosy-bright the brimming goblets crown'd,
 By sage Eumæus borne: the purple tide
 Melanthius from an ample jar supply'd:
 High canisters of bread Philæti^{us} plac'd; 320
 And eager all devour the rich repast.
 Dispos'd apart, Ulysses shares the treat!
 A trivet-table, and ignobler seat,

v. 311. *And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast.*] The antients, says Eustathius, observe that this is the only place where the suitors offer any sacrifice throughout the whole *Odyssey*, and that there is no instance at all, that they make any prayer to the gods. But is it evident from this place, that this is a sacrifice? It is true the sacrificial term of *ἱερευον* is mentioned; but perhaps that word may not denote a sacrifice; for *ἱερεῖα*, though it primarily signifies the flesh of animals offered to the gods, yet in a less proper acceptation implies the flesh of all animals indifferently. Thus Athenæus, τροφήν, τὴν τῶν νεοτῶν ἱερείων, which must be rendered, “the flesh of young animals.” Thus lib. vii. εὐτηνέστερα τὰ νόκτωρ δυόμενα ἱερεῖα, “the flesh of animals that are killed by “night soonest putrifies;” and Galen uses ζῶον, and ἱερεῖον, for an animal indiscriminately. The reason is, because originally no animal was ever slain but some part of it was offered to the gods, and in this sense every ζῶον was ἱερεῖον. If we consult the context in Homer, it must be allowed that there is no other word but *ἱερευον* that distinguishes this from a common repast, through the whole description; and if that word will bear a remote signification, as *ἱερεῖον* does, I should conclude, that this is no sacrifice. Nay, if it should be found that *ἱερευον* implies of necessity a religious act, yet it will not prove that this is more than a customary meal, since the antients at all entertainments made libations to the gods. What may seem to strengthen this conjecture is that the poet immediately adds, that the Greeks, Ἀχαιοὶ, sacrificed in the grove of Apollo; without mentioning that the suitors partook in the sacrifice: nay they seem to be feasting in the palace, while the Greeks are offering in the grove.

v. 323, *A trivet table, and ignobler seat.*] This circumstance is not inserted unnecessarily; the table is suitable to the disguise of

The prince appoints; but to his fire assigns
 The tasteful inwards, and nectareous wines. 325
 Partake my guest, he cry'd, without controul
 The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl:
 Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruffian's rage;
 No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age;
 This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be, 330
 From my great fire too soon devolv'd to me!
 Your violence and scorn, ye suitors cease,
 Lest arms avenge the violated peace.

Aw'd by the prince, so haughty, brave, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue.
 Be patient, peers! at length Antinous cries; 336
 The threats of vain imperious youth despise:
 Wou'd Jove permit the meditated blow,
 That stream of eloquence shou'd cease to flow.

Without reply vouchsaf'd, Antinous ceas'd: 340
 Meanwhile the pomp of festival increas'd:
 By heralds rank'd, in marshall'd order move
 The city-tribes, to pleas'd Apollo's grove:
 Beneath the verdure of which awful shade,
 The lunar hecatomb they grateful laid; 345
 Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.
 But the rich banquet in the dome prepar'd,
 (An humble side-board set) Ulysses shar'd.
 Observant of the prince's high behest,
 His menial train attend the stranger-guest: 350
 Whom Pallas with unpar'd'ning fury fir'd,
 By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir'd.
 A Samian peer, more studious than the rest
 Of vice, who teem'd with many a dead-born jest;
 And urg'd, for title to a consort queen, 355
 Unnumber'd acres arable and green;

Ulysses, and it might have created a jealousy in the suitors if Telemachus had used him with greater distinction.

(Ctesippus nam'd) this lord Ulysses ey'd,
And thus burst out th' imposthumate with pride.

The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend :
Since due regard must wait the prince's friend, 360
Let each a token of esteem bestow :

This gift acquits the dear respect I owe ;
With which he nobly may discharge his feat,
And pay the menials for the master's treat.

He said ; and of the steer before him plac'd, 365
That finewy fragment at Ulysses cast,
Where to the pastern-bone, by nerves combin'd,
The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd ;
Which whizzing high, the wall unseemly sign'd. }
The chief indignant grins a ghastly smile ; 370
Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil :

v. 370. ——— grins a ghastly smile.] The expression in Greek is remarkable :

————— μείδησε δὲ θυμῷ
Σαρδάνιον (or Σαρδόνιον.)

Some tell us that there is an herb frequent in the island of Sardinia, which by tasting distorts the muscles, that a man seems to laugh while he is under a painful agony ; and from thence the " Sardinian laugh" became a proverb, to signify a laugh which concealed an inward pain. Others refer the expression to an ancient custom of the Sardinians (a colony of the Lacedemonians ;) it is pretended that upon a certain festival every year, they not only slew all their prisoners of war, but also all the old men that were above seventy, and obliged these miserable wretches to laugh while they underwent the severity of torment. Either of these reasons fully explains the meaning of the Σαρδόνιος γέλως, and shews it to denote an exterior laugh, and an inward pain. I am inclined to prefer the former interpretation, not only as it appears most natural, but because Virgil seems to understand it in that sense, for he alludes to the above-mentioned quality of the Sardinian herbs, *elogue vii. v. 41.*

" Immo ego Sardois videor tibi amarior herbis."

————— deform'd like him who chaws
Sardinian herbage to contract his jaws.

The reader may observe that Ctesippus breaks out into buffoonry, and the suitors frequently are guilty of it in other parts of the

When thus the prince with pious rage inflam'd :
 Had not th' inglorious wound thy malice aim'd
 Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
 Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear : 375
 Nor shou'd thy fire, a queen his daughter boast ;
 The suitor, now, had vanish'd in a ghost :
 No more, ye lew'd compeers, with lawless pow'r
 Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour :
 For genuine worth, of age mature to know, 380
 My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
 Or if each other's wrongs ye still support,
 With rapes and riot to profane my court ;
 What single arm with numbers can contend ?
 On me let all your lifted swords descend, 385
 And with my life such vile dishonours end.

A long cessation of discourse ensu'd,
 By gentler Agelaus thus renew'd.

A just reproof, ye peers ! your rage restrain
 From the protected guest, and menial train : 390
 And prince ! to stop the source of future ill,
 Assent yourself, and gain the royal will.
 Whilst hope prevail'd to see your fire restor'd,
 Of right the queen refus'd a second lord.
 But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate, 395
 To think he still survives to claim the state ?
 Now press the sovereign dame with warm desire
 To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire :
 The lord selected to the nuptial joys,
 Far hence will lead the long contended prize : 400

Odyssey : these levities have been proscribed by the critics as too low, and unworthy of epic poetry : but Homer adapts himself to his characters, he paints ridiculous men in ridiculous colours ; though I will not say but such characters are more proper for comedy than epic poetry. If ever they are pardonable, they are in Homer, who puts these low pleasantries into the mouths of drunkards and debauchees ; such persons being generally men of no worth or serious deportment.

Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty blest,
You reign, of this imperial dome possesst.

Sage and serene Telemachus replies :

By him at whose behest the thunder flies !

And by the name on earth I most revere,

405

By great Ulysses, and his woes I swear !

(Who never must review his dear domain ;

Inroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train,)

Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,

My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse :

410

But from this dome my parent queen to chase !—

From me, ye gods ! avert such dire disgrace.

But Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom

The suitors souls, insensate of their doom !

A mirthful phrenzy seiz'd the fated crowd ;

415

The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud :

v. 403. *Sage and serene Telemachus replies, &c.*] It is observable that Telemachus swears by the sorrows of his father ; an expression, in my judgment, very noble, and at the same time, full of a filial tenderness. This was an antient custom amongst the orientals, as appears from an oath not unlike it in Genesis xxxi. 53. “ And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.”

But how is this speech to be understood ? for how can Telemachus persuade his mother to marry, when he knows that Ulysses is returned ? There is a concealed and an apparent meaning in the expression. Telemachus, observes Eustathius, swears that he will not hinder his mother from taking an husband, but he means Ulysses : the words therefore are ambiguous, and the ambiguity deceives the suitors, who believe that by this oath Telemachus obliges himself not only not to hinder, but promote the intended nuptials.

v. 415. *A mirthful phrenzy seiz'd, &c.*] It is in the Greek, “ They laughed with other men's cheeks.” There are many explanations of this passage : Eustathius imagines it to denote a feigned and pretended laughter. Erasmus explains it, “ non libenter neque ex animo ridere, sed ita ridere quasi non tuis, sed alienis maxillis rideas.” But if we consult the conduct of the suitors, a contrary interpretation will seem to be necessary : for this laughter of the suitors appears to be very real, and from the heart. Homer calls it, ἀσέβητον, “ excessive, inextinguished ;” and again, ἠδὲ γέλασαν, or they laughed “ with joy, suaviter riserunt ;” which expressions denote a real and unfeigned laughter. But how will the words be brought to bear this construction ? Very naturally :

Floating in gore, portentous to survey !

In each discolour'd vase the viands lay :

they laughed as if they had borrowed their cheeks, as if their cheeks were not their own, and consequently they were not afraid to use them with licence and excess ; such persons as the suitors having no regard for any thing that belongs to another.

Horace makes use of the same expression,

“ Cum rapies in jus, malis ridentem alienis.”

And likewise Valerius ;

“ Errantesque genæ, atque alieno gaudia vultu.”

This is the opinion of Dacier : but there are some lines in the Greek that make it doubtful ; for immediately after the expression of laughing with other men's cheeks, Homer adds, that their eyes flowed with tears, and sorrow seized their souls. It is true Homer describes the suitors under an alienation of mind, and a sudden distraction occasioned by Minerva ; and from hence we may gather the reasons why they are tost by so sudden a transition to contrary passions, from laughter to tears : this moment they laugh extravagantly, and the next they weep with equal excess ; persons in such a condition being liable to such vicissitudes.

v. 417. *Floating in gore, portentous to survey !*

In each discolour'd vase the viands lay.]

This is to be looked upon as a prodigy, the belief of which was established in the old world, and consequently, whether true or false, may be allowed to have a place in poetry. See book xii, note on v. 464.

In the following speech of Theoclymenus there is a beautiful enthusiasm of poetry ; but how are we to understand that Theoclymenus sees these wonders, when they are invisible to all the suitors ? Theoclymenus was a prophet, and speaks of things future as present ; it is the eye of the prophet that sees these events, and the language of prophecy that speaks of them as present. Thus when he says he sees the palace red with blood, and thronged with ghosts ; he anticipates the event, which is verified in the approaching death of the suitors.

Eustathius is of opinion, that by the last words of this speech Theoclymenus intends to express an eclipse of the sun ; this being the day of the new moon, when eclipses happen. Others understand by it the death of the suitors, as when we say the sun is forever gone down upon the dead : Theocritus uses that expression, *ὀνέσκοντι πάντα δεδουκέν ἥλιον*. Homer means by it, that the suitors shall never more behold the light of the sun.

ἥλιος δὲ

ὄργανον ἐξαπόλωλε

Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
And sudden sighs precede approaching woe. 420

In vision wrapt; the * Hypercæan seer
Uprose, and thus divin'd the vengeance near.

O race to death devote! with Stygian shade
Each destin'd peer impending fates invade:
With tears your wan distorted cheeks are drown'd; 425
With sanguine drops the walls are rubied round:
Thick swarms the spacious hall with howling ghosts,
To people Orcus, and the burning coasts!
Nor gives the sun his golden orb to roll,
But universal night usurps the pole! 430

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
The peers reproach the sure divine of fate;
And thus Eurymachus: the dotard's mind
To ev'ry sense is lost, to reason blind:
Swift from the dome conduct the slave away; 435
Let him in open air behold the day.

Tax not, (the heav'n-illumin'd seer rejoin'd)
Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind.

So far Eustathius. It may be added that the Roman poets used the same expression in this latter signification. Thus Catullus,

“ Nobis, quàm semel occidit brevis lux,

“ Nox est perpetua una dormienda.”

Either of these expositions makes the passage intelligible.

* Theoclymenus.

v. 436. *Let him in open air behold the day.*] The suitors taking the prediction of Theoclymenus literally, viz. “ I see you all involved in darkness,” think him distracted, not conceiving his words to be a prophecy; and therefore by way of derision command him to be carried into a place of public resort, that he may convince himself it is full day. Eustathius imagines, they intended to reproach him with drunkenness, because it makes all objects appear indistinct and different from the reality: he quotes a pleasant expression of Anacharsis to this purpose: a certain person telling him at an entertainment that he had married a very ugly woman; “ I think so too, replies Anacharsis; but fill me a bumper, that I may make her a beauty.”

v. 437. *Tax not, (the heav'n-illumin'd seer rejoin'd,) &c.*] Eustathius explains the answer of Theoclymenus to be both pleasant and

No clouds of error dim th' ethereal rays,
 Her equal pow'r each faithful sense obeys. 440
 Unguided hence my trembling steps I bend,
 Far hence, before yon' hov'ring deaths descend;
 Lest the ripe harvest of revenge begun,
 I share the doom ye suitors cannot shun.

This said, to sage Piræus sped the seer, 445
 His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.
 O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
 And aim to wound the prince with pointless wit:
 Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
 Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice; 450
 Why such profusion of indulgence shown
 To this poor, tim'rous, toil-detesting drone?
 That other feeds on planetary schemes,
 And pays his host with hideous noon-day dreams.
 But, prince! for once at least believe a friend, 455
 To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send,

serious: "I have eyes, and therefore have no occasion for a guide
 " to lead me from the palace; I have ears, and therefore hear that
 " my absence is desired; I have both my feet, and therefore am
 " able to go away without giving others the trouble to assist me;
 " and I have an understanding well informed, by which I see the
 " evil that threatens the suitors, and haste away to avoid it."

v. 456. *To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send.*] It is evident from this passage that the name of Sicily is very antient, and Eustathius makes the following remark upon it: that the reason why the poet never mentions this word in describing the wanderings of Ulysses which happen chiefly near Sicily, is to make his poetry more surprising and marvellous; and that the more to countenance those fabulous relations and miracles which he has told to the Phæacians, he chuses to speak of it by names less known, and less familiar to his readers. Dacier observes from Bochart, that this island received the name of Sicily from the Phœnicians long before the birth of Homer, or the war of Troy: Sicul in their language signifies "perfection;" they called it the "isle of perfection," because it held the chief rank amongst all the islands in the Mediterranean: "It is the largest and best island in all our seas," says Strabo. It has likewise been thought to have taken its name from the Syrian language, namely from Segol, or Segul, a raisin. For long before the vine was known in Afric, Sicily was famous for its vineyards, and from thence the Carthaginians imported their

Where, if they yield their freight across the main,
Dear sell the slaves ! demand no greater gain.

Thus jovial they ; but nought the prince replies ;
Full on his fire he roll'd his ardent eyes ; 460
Impatient straight to flesh his virgin-sword ;
From the wise chief he waits the deathful word.
Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen
To see the circle sat, of all unseen.
Sated at length they rise, and bid prepare 465
An eve-repast, with equal cost and care :
But vengeful Pallas, with preventing speed
A feast proportion'd to their crimes decreed ;
A feast of death ! the feasters doom'd to bleed !

raisins and wines, Homer celebrates this island for its wines in the ninth Odyssy,

Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour,
And Jove descends in each prolific show'r.

It is likewise probable from this passage, that the Sicilians traded in slaves ; for their lands were fertile, and they merchandized for them to manure the ground. I should rather think that they were remarkable for their barbarity to their slaves ; the suitors speaking by way of terroure to intimidate Theoclymenus ; and the expression seems to bear the same import with that concerning Echetus, we will “ send him to Echetus, or the Sicilians, who will use “ him with the utmost cruelty.

v. 463. *Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen.*] The word in the original is *διὰ φέγετον*, and signifies a large seat that would hold two persons, from *δις φέγετον*.

This circumstance (observes Eustathius) is not inserted in vain : the poet describes Penelope thus seated, that she might see and hear the actions and designs of the suitors, in order to form her conduct according to the occasion : now for instance, she perceives their insolence risen to such an height, that she dares make no further delay, but immediately proclaims herself the prize of the best archer ; and this naturally connects the story with the next book.

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK XXI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The bending of Ulysses's bow.

Penelope, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who shall first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses taking Eumæus and Philætius apart, discovers himself to them; then returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause it to be delivered to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter in the same instant thunders from heaven; Ulysses accepts the omen, and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals fires,
With her own art Penelope inspires :
Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
The well-aim'd arrow thro' the distant ring,

* This book is intitled Τόξος Θέσις, or the "proposition of the bow:" this action of Penelope has given occasion of raillery both to modern and antient critics; they insinuate that she proposed this exercise of the bow to try the strength of her gallants, determining to have regard to that single qualification in the choice of her husband.

"Penelope vires juvenum tentabat in arcu,
"Qui latus argueret, corneus arcus erat."

They interpret νεύειν ἐνλάνυσαι into a sense very contrary to the character of Penelope. It is true, other authors have directly charged

Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame; 5
But discord and black death await the game!

The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends,
At distance due a virgin-train attends;
A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd: 10

her with in chastity, and affirm that she had a son named Pan, because all the suitors had a share in him. Lycophron calls her

Βασίλειαν σεμνῶς κασσωρεύσαν.

It is the exercise of the bow that has occasioned these imputations; for none of Homer's commentators have given the reason why she proposes that exercise in particular; and therefore seeing no reason for it, they have invented a false one, and give the story a ridiculous air: I flatter myself that a better solution may be found out, and a reason given why Penelope proposes this exercise in particular, and preferable to any other.

We are to remember that this day was sacred to Apollo; this is evident from the preceding book, where the Ithacans offer an hecatomb in a grove consecrated to that deity: the diversion suits the day, the exercise of the bow being proper to be practised on the festival of that deity, who is the patron of it. Several of the titles of Apollo are derived from it; 'Εκάεργος, 'Εκατηβονος, 'Αργυρότοξος. It is strange that this necessary observation should escape the notice of all commentators.

If any thing further were wanting to reconcile us to the conduct of Penelope in proposing the bow, an instance almost parallel to it might be produced from history. When Cambyfes was preparing to make war against Æthiopia, the king of that country bent his great bow with two fingers in the presence of the Persian ambassadors, and unbending it again, delivered it to them with these words, That when the Persians could do the like, they might hope to conquer the Æthiopians. There is nothing more absurd in the delivery of the bow to the suitors by Penelope, than in the same act of the Æthiopian king to the Persian ambassadors.

v. 9. *A brazen key she held, &c.*] The numerous particularities and digressive histories crowded together in the beginning of this book have not escaped censure. The poet very circumstantially describes the key, and the make of it, as likewise the bow and quiver, then tells us who gave it to Ulysses; at the mention of the donor's name he starts into a little history of him, and returns not in many lines to his subject; he then no less circumstantially describes the chamber, and the frame of the door, he descends to every particular of Penelope's opening it, and every step and motion she takes till she produces the bow before the suitors. This conduct has been liable to objection, as made up of particulars of small importance

Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
 Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay;
 There shone high heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
 And there the bow which great Ulysses bore,
 And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept 15
 Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when Sparta's shores he trod,
 On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd:
 Beneath Orsilochus's roof they met;
 One loss was private, one a public debt; 20
 Messena's state from Ithaca detains
 Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd-swains;

to no proposed end. But notwithstanding, every circumstance is not without its effect and beauty, and nothing better shews the power of the poet's diction. So great a critic as Vida admired this very passage. Poetic. lib. ii.

“ Ipsa procos etiam ut jussit certare sagittis
 “ Penelope, optatas promittens callida tædas
 “ Victori, per quanta moræ dispendia mentes
 “ Suspensas trahit, ante viri quam proferat arcum ?”

The poet adapts his verse to the nature of his subject; the description loiters, to express the studied delay of Penelope, and her unwillingness to bring affairs to a decision. However I will not promise that these digressions and antient histories will please every reader; the passage is so far from being faulty, that it is really an instance of Homer's judgment; yet every thing that is not a fault, is not a beauty. The case is, Penelope proposes the trial of the bow, merely to protract time from the nuptials; she is slow in producing it for the same reason; and Homer to paint this slowness in a lively manner, lets the subject of the poem stand still, and wanders out of the way, that he may not come too soon to the end of his journey.

v. 21. *Messena's state, &c.*] It has been disputed whether Messene here was a city or a country; Strabo affirms it to be a country, lib. viii. It was a port of Laconia, under the dominion of Menelaus in the time of the war with Troy; and then (continues that author) the city named Messene was not built. Pausanias is of the same opinion, lib. iv. c. i. “ Before the battle of Leuctra
 “ between the Thebans and Lacedæmonians, it is my judgment
 “ that there was no city called Messene;” this is evident from the words of Homer,

Τὼ δὲ ἐν Μεσσηνί ξυμβλήτην ἀλλήλοισιν
 Οἶκον ἐν Ὀρσιλόχοιο.

And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
 The king and elders trust their common cause.
 But Iphitus employ'd on other cares, 25
 Search'd the wide country for his wand'ring mares,
 And mules, the strongest of the lab'ring kind;
 Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!
 For journeying on to Hercules, at length
 That lawless wretch, that man of brutal strength, 30
 Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress;
 And for the beauteous mares destroy'd his guest:

Now Orsilochus lived in Pheræ, a city of Messenia, and consequently Ulysses and Iphitus meeting at his palace in Messenia, Homer must mean the country, not the city. That Orsilochus lived in Pheræ, appears from the third *Odyssey*.

Ἐς Φηρὰς δ' ἰκοντο Διοκλῆος ποτὶ δῶμα,
 Ὀρσίλοχοιο.

This Iphitus was the son of Eurytus mentioned in the eighth book, famous for his skill in archery.

Vain Eurytus! whose art became his crime,
 Swept from the earth, he perish'd in his prime,
 Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,
 Who boldly durst defy the bowyer-god.

So that even this digression is not foreign to the purpose: the poet largely describes the bow, being to make great use of it in the sequel of the *Odyssey*: he shews it was originally in the possession of Eurytus, the most famous archer in the world: nay, this very digression may appear to be absolutely necessary; it being requisite to describe that bow, as of no common excellence and strength, which was not to be drawn by any of the suitors; and at the same time it sets off the strength of the hero of the poem, who alone is able to bend it.

v. 22. *Three hundred sheep, &c.*] It has been observed in a former annotation, that such ravages or piracies were not only lawful but honourable amongst the antients; why then is Ulysses here sent to redemand the spoils made by the Messenians? Dacier answers, that such inroads were not allowable except in open war; she means between Greeks and Greeks; for they themselves exercised such piracies with impunity against other nations.

v. 31. *Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress.*] Homer very solemnly condemns this action of Hercules in slaying Iphitus; and some authors (remarks Eustathius) defend him by saying, he was seized with madness, and threw Iphitus down from the top of his

He gave the bow; and on Ulysses' part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart:
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore 35
 Their first, last pledges! for they met no more.
 The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 Ulysses bore not from his native land;
 Nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 But kept, in dear memorial of his friend. 40

Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step, the matron went;
 Then o'er the pavements glides with grace divine,
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)
 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd, 45
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlay'd.
 The bolt, obedient to the filken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;

palace; but this is contrary to Homer, and to the sentiment of those who write that Hercules was delivered as a slave to Omphale, for the expiation of the murder of Iphitus.

But what chiefly wants explication is the expression,

—— ἐδὲ τράπεζαν
 ἤδεσται.——

That is, “he paid no reverence to his table.” The table was held sacred by the antients, by means of which, honour was paid to the god of friendship and hospitality: it was therefore a crime to dishonour it by any indecent behaviour. To this purpose Juvenal:

“Hic verbis nullus pudor, aut reverentia mensæ.”

The statues of the gods were raised upon the tables, they were consecrated by placing on them salt, which was always esteemed holy, and by offering libations to the gods from them: the table therefore is called in Plutarch *φιλίων Θεῶν βωμὸν, ἢ ξενίων*, “the altar of the gods of friendship and hospitality;” and therefore to have eaten at the same table, was esteemed an inviolable obligation of friendship: and *τράπεζαν παραβαίνειν*, to transgress against the table, a breach of the laws of hospitality, and the blackest of crimes. I will only add, that it was customary upon making an alliance of hospitality to give mutual tokens; thus Ulysses here presents Iphitus with a sword and spear; Iphitus Ulysses with a bow. And the producing these tokens was a recognition of the covenant of hospitality between the persons themselves, and their descendants in following generations.

The wards respondent to the key turn round ;
 The bars fall back ; the flying valves resound ; 50
 Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.
 She moves majestic thro' the wealthy room,
 Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume ;
 There from the column where aloft it hung, 55
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung :
 Across her knees she lay'd the well-known bow,
 And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.
 To full satiety of grief she mourns,
 Then silent, to the joyous hall returns, 60
 To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
 Th' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.
 Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
 Which held th' alternate brags and silver rings,
 Full in the portal the chaste queen appears, 65
 And with her veil conceals the coming tears :
 On either side awaits a virgin fair ;
 While thus the matron, with majestic air.

v. 51. *Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring.*] This description presents us with a noble image : Homer introduces it to shew the largeness and strength of the door, which resounds as it opens. This exalts a trifling circumstance into sublimity and dignity, and renders a common action poetical ; not unlike that in the xxivth of the Iliad.

Wide as appears some palace-gate display'd,
 So broad his pinions stretch'd their ample shade.

v. 57. *Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
 And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.*]

The bow recalls to her mind the thought of her husband, and this raises her sorrows. The least trifle that once belonged to a beloved person, is sufficient to cast a cloud over the soul, which naturally falls in a shower of tears : and no doubt the exercise which the suitors are to practise with the bow, upon which her future fate depends, aggravates her sorrows ; she weeps not only for the loss of Ulysses, but at the thought that she is ready to enter upon second nuptials, contrary to her inclinations.

Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,
For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows;
If these neglected, faded charms can move? 70

Or is it but a vain pretence, you love?

If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,

Hear the conditions, and commence the strife.

Who first Ulysses' wond'rous bow shall bend, 75

And thro' twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,

Him will I follow, and forsake my home,

For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,

Long, long the scene of all my past delight,

And still to last, the vision of my night! 80

Graceful she said, and bade Eumæus show

The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.

From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring

Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.

Philætiús too relents, but secret shed 85

The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said.

Hence to your fields, ye rustics! hence away,

Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day;

Nor to the royal heart recall in vain

The sad remembrance of a perish'd man. 90

Enough her precious tears already flow——

Or share the feast with due respect, or go

To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow:

No vulgar task! Ill suits this courtly crew

That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew. 95

I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er

While yet a child) what majesty he bore!

And still (all infant as I was) retain

The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man.

He said, but in his soul fond joys arise, 100

And his proud hopes already win the prize.

To speed the flying shaft thro' every ring,

Wretch! is not thine! the arrows of the king

Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing! }

Then thus Telemachus. Some god I find 105
 With pleasing phrenzy has possess'd my mind ;
 When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
 Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart ?
 Come then ye suitors ! and dispute a prize
 Richer than all th' Achaian state supplies, 110
 Than all proud Argos, or Mycæna knows,
 Than all our isles or continents enclose :
 A woman matchless, and almost divine,
 Fit for the praise of ev'ry tongue but mine.
 No more excuses then, no more delay ; 115
 Haste to the trial—Lo ! I lead the way.
 I too may try, and if this arm can wing
 The feather'd arrow thro' the destin'd ring,
 Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,
 I shall not sorrow for a mother lost ; 120
 But blest in her, possess these arms alone,
 Heir of my father's strength, as well as throne.

v. 105. *Then thus Telemachus. Some god I find, &c.*] This speech is not without greater obscurity than is usual in so clear a writer as Homer. M. Dacier has done it justice, and clearly opened the sense of it in her paraphrase. “ Surely, says Telemachus, Jupiter has disordered my understanding : I see my mother, wise as she is, preparing to leave the palace, and enter upon a second marriage ; and yet in these melancholy circumstances, I think of nothing but diverting myself, and being an idle spectator of this exercise of the bow : no, no, this is not to be suffered : you (the suitors) use your utmost efforts to rob me of Penelope, I will therefore use mine to retain her : a woman the most excellent in any nation. But why do I praise her ? you know her worth ; use therefore no pretext to defer the trial of the bow, that we may come to an issue ; I will try the bow with you ; and if I succeed, then I will retain her as the prize of the conquest ; then she shall not be obliged to second nuptials : nor will Penelope abandon a son, who emulating his father, is (like him) able to bear the prize from so many antagonists.”

This is the true meaning of the words of Telemachus ; the diction indeed is somewhat embarrassed, and the connexion a little obscure ; but this is done by the poet, to express the disorder and hurry of mind in Telemachus, who fears for the fate of Penelope : therefore the connexion of the periods is interrupted, to represent Telemachus starting through eagerness of spirit from thought to thought, without order or regularity.

He spoke; then rising, his broad sword unbound,
 And cast his purple garment on the ground.
 A trench he open'd; in a line he plac'd
 The level axes, and the points made fast. 125
 (His perfect skill the wond'ring gazers ey'd,
 The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd.)
 Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand;
 And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand. 130
 Three times, with beating heart, he made essay;
 Three times, unequal to the task gave way:
 A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd:
 And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd,
 The fourth had drawn it. The great fire with joy 135
 Beheld, but with a sign forbade the boy.
 His ardour straight th' obedient prince suppress'd,
 And artful, thus the suitor-train address'd.

v. 135. *The fourth had drawn it. The great fire with joy
 Beheld, but with a sign forbade—]*

It is not apparent at the first view why Ulysses prohibits Telemachus from drawing the bow; but Eustathius gives sufficient reason for this conduct: it would have defeated his whole design, and rendered the death of the suitors impracticable; for Telemachus has declared that he would retain Penelope, if he succeeded in the exercise of the bow; and this of necessity would create an immediate contest between that hero and the suitors, and bring matters unseasonably to extremity. The same author assigns a second reason: Ulysses fears lest Telemachus, by bending the bow, should make it more supple and flexible, and therefore commands him to desist, lest it should be drawn by the suitors; besides, if he had drawn it, it would have raised an emulation amongst them, and they would have applied the utmost of their abilities not to be outdone by so young a person as Telemachus; but his despair to effect it, makes them less solicitous, the trial being equally unsuccessful to them all.

It may also be observed, that there is a very happy address made to Telemachus by Homer; he shews us that he could have drawn it, but desists in obedience to Ulysses: thus the poet has found out a way to give Telemachus the honour of the victory without obtaining it; and at the same time shews the superiour wisdom of Ulysses, who restrains his son in the heat of his attempt; and makes him, by a happy presence of mind, at once foresee the danger, and prevent it.

Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature!
 (For heav'n forbid, such weakness should endure) 140
 How shall this arm, unequal to the bow,
 Retort an insult, or repel a foe?
 But you! whom heav'n with better nerves has blest,
 Accept the trial, and the prize contest.

He cast the bow before him, and apart 145
 Against the polish'd quiver propt the dart.
 Resuming then his seat, Epitheus' son
 The bold Antinous to the rest begun.

“ From where the goblet first begins to flow,
 “ From right to left, in order take the bow; 150
 “ And prove your several strengths”—The princes
 heard,

And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd :

v. 149. *From where the goblet first begins to flow,
 From right to left, &c.]*

Antinous makes this proposition, that every person may try his skill without confusion. Perhaps it is proposed by Antinous by way of omen, the right hand being reckoned fortunate: but however that be, it is very evident that in the entertainments of the antients the cup was delivered towards the right hand: hence δεξι-
 ωσις came to signify to drink towards the right hand; and Athe-
 næus thus interprets this passage in the first of the Iliad.

———— χρυσείοις δεπάεσσι
 Δειδέχατ' ἀλλήλους. ————

Which, remarks that author, signifies ἐδεξιῶντο προπίνοντες ἑαυτοῖς
 ταῖς δεξιαῖς. And there is express mention made of this practice,
 lib. i. v. 597. of the Iliad.

———— θεοῖς ἐνδέξια πᾶσιν
 Ωἶνοχοῦι ————

That is, “ beginning from the right hand,” as the scholiast
 rightly interprets it, “ Vulcan delivered the bowl to all the gods.”

This observation explains various passages in many antient au-
 thors, as well as in the Iliad and Odyssey: the custom indeed is
 not of any great importance, but is at least a curiosity, and va-
 luable because antient. I doubt not but the bowl out of which
 these persons drank, would by antiquaries be thought inestimable;
 and the possession of an antient bowl is not quite so valuable as the
 knowledge of an antient custom.

v. 152. ———— *Leiodes, blameless priest.]* The word in the origi-
 nal is θυσιαστής, a person who makes predictions from victims or

The eldest born of Oenops' noble race,
 Who next the goblet held his holy place:
 He, only he, of all the suitor-throng,
 Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong. 155
 With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains,
 The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!
 Already in despair he gives it o'er:
 Take it who will, he cries, I strive no more. 160
 What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow?
 What souls and spirits shall it send below?

from the smoke of the sacrifice. This Leiodes, the poet tells us, sat next to the bowl; the reason of it, saith Eustathius, was because the suitors feared lest poison should be mixed in it, and they thought themselves safe through his care and inspection: but it may perhaps be a better reason to say, that he sat there in discharge of his office as a prophet, to make libations to the gods; as was customary at the beginning and end of all entertainments.

The poet adds, that this prophet was placed at the extremity of the apartment; the reason may be because he was an enemy to the insolence of the suitors; and therefore withdrew from their conversation; or perhaps the word is inserted only to shew that his place was the first, (for Eustathius explains *μυχοίτατος* by *πρῶτος* and *ἐνδύτατος*) and therefore he was the most proper person to begin the experiment, that the rest might make trial according as they were seated, successively; and what makes this the more probable is, that the propination always began from the most honourable person.

V. 161. *What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow?*

What souls and spirits, &c.]

There is in these words a full and clear prediction of the destruction of the suitors by the bow of Ulysses: but what follows, when the prophet comes to explain himself, renders it ambiguous. "Bet-
 " ter indeed to die," &c. The next line is very remarkable for the distinction it makes between *ψυχή* and *θυμὸς*, soul and spirit: the reader may turn to the note on lib. xxiii. v. 92, 124. of the Iliad; and that on lib. xi. v. 743. of the Odyssey, where an account is given of the notion of the antients concerning this division. I shall only here add a passage in St. Paul to the Hebrews, which did not then occur to me, that remarkably falls in with it.
 " The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-
 " edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and
 " spirit." Heb. iv. 12.

This Leiodes falls by the sword of Ulysses in the next book: is it not injustice to take away the life of a person who is here described as a man of virtue, detesting the actions of the suitors, and

Better indeed to die, and fairly give
Nature her debt, than disappointed live,
With each new sun to some new hope a prey, 165
Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.

How long in vain Penelope we fought?
This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,
And send us with some humbler wife to live,
Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give. 170

Thus speaking on the floor the bow he plac'd,
(With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd)
At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,
And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said. 175
What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled?
Thy coward-function ever is in fear;
Those arms are dreadful which thou can'st not bear.
Why should this bow be fatal to the brave?
Because the priest is born a peaceful slave. 180

Mark then what others can—He ended there,
And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare;
He gives it instant flame: then fast beside
Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.
With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er, 185
Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.

dignified with prophecy? It is easy to answer this objection; he is one of the suitors to Penelope, as appears from his trying the bow among the rest of them, in order to obtain her in marriage, and consequently he is involved in the general crime: this distinguishes his case from that of Medon and Phemius, whom Ulysses spares; it appearing that they made no pretensions to the bed of Penelope; whereas Leiodes endeavours to marry the queen, which single act would exclude Ulysses from his own bed and dominions. Besides, if we would escape the punishment of wicked men, we must not only detest their crimes, but conversation.

v. 186. *Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.*] This passage has been egregiously misunderstood, and it has been imagined that this unguent is to anoint the limbs of the suitors to make them more supple, after the manner of the wrestlers who observed that custom; but it is very evident that *τέλειον* is to be understood in the

Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain ;
The bow inflexible resists their pain.

The force of great Eurymachus alone

And bold Antinous, yet untry'd, unknown :

190

Those only now remain'd ; but those confess

Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,

The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.

Greek, and that it is the bow, not the limbs of the suitors, that is to be anointed. Eustathius thus fully explains it : the lard is brought to make the bow pliant, they chafe it before the fire that the particles of it may enter the pores of the bow, and render it flexible. But Eustathius falls into an error about the seat that is brought by Melanthius : he imagines the suitors sit while they drew the bow, that they might be upon a level with the ringlets which were fixed upon the ground ; whereas in reality the seat is brought, that they may sit while they chafe the bow. Homer himself says, when Leiodes endeavours to draw it, that he stood up, ἀνίστατο, and again,

He stood, and stepping forward try'd the bow.

Στῆ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἐδὼν ἰὼν, καὶ τόξα πειρήτιζεν.

But how is this to be reconciled with the conduct of Ulysses, who is directly affirmed to sit while he draws it.

— εἴλακεν νεύρην γλυφίδαζε

αὐτόθεν ἐκ δίφροιο καθήμενος —

That circumstance is inserted to shew the great strength and dexterity of Ulysses, who is able to draw it in that disadvantageous posture : the poet in every incident maintains his superiority.

v. 193. *Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,*

The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.]

It is wonderful how exactly the poet observes the distribution of time ; he distinctly marks the action of every day, and allots a proper space to every action. In this place the poem goes forward while Ulysses withdraws to engage the assistance of Philætius and Eumæus. The suitors are amused and employed about the bow, while Ulysses steals away from their observation, and returns without raising their jealousy. The poet likewise manages the time of the discovery of Ulysses very judiciously ; though he knew the fidelity of Eumæus and Philætius, yet he trusts them not with the knowledge of his person, till the very hour of execution ; agreeable to the general character of his cautious nature and profound secrecy. But then is not this an imputation to Penelope, in that

The king observes them : he the hall forfakes, 195

And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes,

Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke :

Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock !

Shall I the secret of my breast conceal,

Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell ? 200

Say, shou'd some fav'ring god restore again

The lost Ulysses to his native reign ?

How beat your hearts ? what aid wou'd you afford ?

To the proud suitors, or your antient lord ?

Philæti^{us} thus. Oh were thy word not vain ! 205

Wou'd mighty Jove restore that man again !

These aged sinews with new vigour strung

In his blest cause should emulate the young.

With equal vows Eumæus too implor'd

Each pow'r above, with wishes for his lord. 210

He saw their secret souls, and thus began.

Those vows the gods accord : behold the man !

Your own Ulysses ! twice ten years detain'd

By woes and wand'rings from this hapless land :

At length he comes ; but comes despis'd, unknown, 215

And finding faithful, you, and you alone.

All else have cast him from their very thought,

Ev'n in their wishes, and their pray'rs forgot !

Hear then, my friends ! If Jove this arm succeed,

And give yon' impious revellers to bleed, 220

should chuse to discover himself to these two persons, rather than to his queen ? The answer is, There was a necessity for his discovery to the former, but none to the latter ; he wants their assistance in the future engagement, and makes good use of it ; whereas a discovery made to the queen could have been of no advantage, and might possibly have proved detrimental ; besides, this is a season that requires expedition ; and we find Ulysses complies with it, and is very concise in the discovery and interview with Philæti^{us} and Eumæus. The poet therefore reserves the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope to a time of more leisure, that he may dwell upon it more largely, and beautify his poem with so essential an ornament with greater solemnity.

My care shall be, to bless your future lives
 With large possessions, and with faithful wives;
 Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,
 And each on young Telemachus attend,
 And each be call'd his brother, and my friend. 225
 To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye;
 Lo! the broad scar indented on my thigh,
 When with Autolychns's sons, of yore,
 On Parnass' top I chas'd the tusky boar.
 His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd 230
 The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd:

v. 231. ——— *and the scar expos'd.*] Aristotle treating of the different sorts of remembrances, chap. xvii. of his Poetics, divides them into two kinds, "natural or adventitious;" the former sort is simple and without art, which poets use for want of invention; as for instance, when they bring about the discovery of a person by some natural mark or token upon the body: the latter are either marks upon the body, or scars occasioned by some accident, or token distinct from the body, such as the casket, &c. which Plautus and Terence use in the discovery of several persons in their comedies: of this latter kind is this scar of Ulysses; it is an adventitious remembrance, and these remembrances (continues Aristotle) may be used with more or less art: thus in the case of this wound of Ulysses, it is used by Homer in a different way: Euryclæa, lib. xix. descries it accidentally; Ulysses here shews it to Eumæus and Philætiüs voluntarily; and it is certain that all those marks which a poet designedly and deliberately uses to establish any verity, have less ingenuity than those which produce their effects undesignedly and casually, and consequently the remembrance in the nineteenth Odyssey is more ingenious than the second discovery. The reason is, it shews no ingenuity to have recourse to such marks, when we have an intention to make the discovery: it causes no surprise nor variety, neither is it produced by any art or invention: on the contrary, the other in the nineteenth book arises from the subject, and not from the fancy of the poet only. But, says Dacier, when Aristotle affirms that this present remembrance wants ingenuity, we are not yet to imagine that he condemns it; for it is a remembrance made by necessity. Ulysses has not opportunity to wait till the discovery is made accidentally, as in the nineteenth book; he is absolutely compelled to make it designedly, to engage Eumæus and Philætiüs in his cause, by plainly proving to them that he was the real Ulysses. If therefore that hero shews less art in the manner of the remembrance, he shews more wisdom in accommodating his conduct to the opportunity, and using the present conjuncture ad-

Eager they view'd ; with joy they stood amaz'd ;
 With tear-full eyes o'er all their master gaz'd :
 Around his neck their longing arms they cast,
 His head, his shoulders, and his knnes embrac'd : 235
 Tears follow'd tears ; no word was in their pow'r :
 In solemn silence fell the kindly show'r.

The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
 And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.

Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun, 240
 But first the wise man ceas'd, and thus begun.

Enough——on other cares your thought employ,
 For danger waits on all untimely joy,

Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near :

Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear. 245

Re-enter then, not all at once, but stay

Some moments you, and let me lead the way.

To me, neglected as I am, I know

The haughty suitors will deny the bow ;

But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis borne away, 250

Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.

At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,

And each lock fast the well-compacted gate :

Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear ;

Tho' arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear. 255

To thy strict charge, Philætiús ! we consign

The court's main gate : to guard that pass be thine.

vantageously, to bring about his own re-establishment. I will only further observe the judgment of Homer in making this discovery with the utmost brevity, concluding it in the compass of two verses : he had before enlarged upon the wound, and the reader is already fully instructed in the story : there is likewise another reason that requires conciseness ; the urgency of the time demands it, for Ulysses and Eumæus could not be long in conference without observation, and raising the jealousy of the suitors.

v. 252. *At ev'ry portal, &c.*] This is a very necessary injunction ; Ulysses fears not only lest any of the suitors should make his escape, but also lest any of the women who were friends to the suitors should give information to their partisans abroad, and introduce them to their assistance. Eustathius.

This said, he first return'd : the faithful swains
At distance follow, as their king ordains.

Before the flame Eurymachus now stands, 260

And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands :

Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man

Sigh'd from his mighty soul and thus began :

I mourn the common cause : for, oh my friends !

On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends ? 265

Not the lost nuptials can affect me more,

(For Greece has beauteous dames on ev'ry shore)

But baffled thus ! confess'd so far below

Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow !

How shall all ages our attempt deride ? 270

Our weakness scorn ! Antinous thus reply'd.

Not so, Eurymachus : that no man draws

The wond'rous bow, attend another cause.

Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day,

Which thoughtless we in games would waste away : 275

v. 266. *Not the lost nuptials* ———] No doubt but Eurymachus misrepresents his real sentiments, when he makes the loss of Penelope of little importance ; but his conduct is an exact picture of human nature : when we have used our utmost endeavours to obtain our desires, and have failed in the attempt, the object immediately loses its value, and we would be thought to despise it. To be easy under any disappointment is the result of reason ; but to seem to despise what we have been very solicitous to obtain, arises from the pride of our natures, which persuades us to endeavour to cheat the world into an opinion that we have not been disappointed : the remedy for this disease of our minds, is a regular conduct, and to hold the ballance even in all our affairs, that the scale be not raised too high or depressed too low.

v. 274. *Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day.*] Antinous in this reply, speaks, as well as Eurymachus, with dissimulation ; he is unwilling to give a true reason, and therefore invents a false one : the true reason why he defers the trial of the bow is, because he fears his inability to draw it : the feigned reason is a pretended piety paid to the day : it was a day to be observed religiously, and he insinuates that all sports upon it are a profanation of it ; and consequently Apollo being provoked, disables them from drawing the bow, of which he is the patron. This is the reason why he proposes to offer a libation, to atone for the abuse of the day by their diversions. But perhaps the reason why Antinous defers the

'Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forego,
 And here leave fixt the ringlets in a row.
 Now bid the few'r approach, and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine,
 So end our night : before the day shall spring, 280
 The choicest off'rings let Melanthius bring :
 Let then to Phœbus' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes, high-curling to the skies.
 So shall the patron of these arts bestow
 (For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow. 285

They heard well-pleas'd : the ready heralds bring
 The cleansing waters from the limpid spring :
 The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
 In order circling to the peers around.
 That rite compleat, up-rose the thoughtful man, 290
 And thus his meditated scheme began.

If what I ask your noble minds approve,
 Ye peers and rivals in the royal love !
 Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous' ear,
 (Whose sage decision I with wonder hear) 295
 And if Eurymachus the motion please ;
 Give heav'n this day, and rest the bow in peace.
 To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
 And take it he, the favour'd of the skies !

exercise of the bow to the following day, is not because he thought it unlawful to proceed in it, on the festival of Apollo ; for why should an exercise which was instituted in honour of that deity, be thought a profanation of the day ? I should therefore rather conclude, that the impiety intended by Antinous, was their omission in not offering a sacrifice to that god before they begun the trial, that he might prosper their endeavours : the conclusion of his speech makes this opinion probable : " Let us now defer the experiment, and offer sacrifice in the morning to Apollo, that he may give us success in drawing the bow ;" which implies that they were unsuccessful because they had forgot to sacrifice. I will only add, that Antinous mentions a goat as an offering to Apollo ; we have before seen bulls, sheep and bullocks offered to that deity ; the reason why a goat is a proper victim, I suppose is because he is a rural god, and patron of shepherds, and therefore all kinds of beasts were offered to him promiscuously.

But since 'till then, this trial you delay, 300

Trust it one moment to my hands to-day :

Fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,

What once I was, whom wretched you despise ;

If yet this arm its antient force retain ;

Or if my woes (a long-continued train) 305

And wants and insults, make me less than man ?

Rage flash'd in light'ning from the suitors eyes,

Yet mix'd with terrour at the bold emprise.

Antinous then : O miserable guest !

Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast ? 310

Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd

To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,

Admitted here with princes to confer,

A man unknown, a needy wanderer ?

To copious wine this insolence we owe, 315

And much thy betters wine can overthrow :

The great Eurytion when this frenzy stung,

Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung ;

v. 318. *Pirithous' roofs, &c.*] The story of the Centaur is this: Pirithous, a Lapithite, marrying Hippodamia the daughter of Adrastus, invited the Centaurs and Lapithæ to his nuptials ; the Centaurs drinking to great excess, and offering violence to the bride, engaged them in a quarrel ; Eurytion was the person who began the disorder, and the war that ensued became fatal to the whole nation of the Centaurs. Horace alludes to this history.

“ At nequis modici transfiliat manera liberi,

“ Centaurea monet cum Lapithis rixa super mero

“ Debellata” —————

The Lapithites were a people of Thessaly inhabiting the mountains Pindus and Othrys ; the Centaurs were their neighbours, and dwelt in mount Pelion. This war between the Lapithites and the Centaurs probably lasted about a year : for it began on the day of the nuptials of Pirithous, and on the day that his son Polypætes was born, he obtained a decisive victory over the Centaurs, and drove them from mount Pelion. Thus lib. ii. v. 856. of the Iliad.

Thy troops Argissa, Polypætes leads

And Eleon, shelter'd by Olympus' shades ;

Sprung from Pirithous of immortal race,

The fruit of fair Hippodamé's embrace,

That day when hurl'd from Pelion's cloudy head

To distant dens the shaggy Centaurs fled,

Boundless the Centaur rag'd; 'till one and all
 The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall; 320
 His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
 And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.
 Hence with long war the double race was curst,
 Fatal to all, but to th' aggressor first.
 Such fate I prophesy our guest attends, 325
 If here this interdicted bow he bends:

Nor shall these walls such insolence contain;
 The first fair wind transports him o'er the main;
 Where Echetus to death the guilty brings,
 (The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of kings.) 330
 Better than that, if thou approve our cheer;
 Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the queen her just dislike express:
 'Tis impious, prince! to harm the stranger guest,
 Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name, 335
 And some respect Telemachus may claim.
 What if th' immortals on the man bestow
 Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow?
 Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
 Accept a wand'ring stranger for my lord? 340
 A hope so idle never touch'd his brain:
 Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Far he be banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean.

This history is at large related by Ovid, *Metam.* xii. He calls Eurytion by the name of Eurytus, and describes the nuptial feast in a cave, and not in the palace of Pirithous. Thus Mr. Dryden,

In a cool cave's recess the treat was made,
 Whose entrance trees with spreading boughs o'ershade:
 There one more brutal of the brutal brood,
 Or whether wine or beauty fir'd his blood,
 Or both at once; beheld with lustful eyes
 The bride, at once, resolv'd to make his prize:
 Down went the board; and fast'ning on her hair
 He seiz'd with sudden force the frightened fair:
 'Twas Eurytus began, —————

O fair! and wisest of so fair a kind :

345

(Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd)

Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,

We dread the all-arraigning voice of fame ;

We dread the censure of the meanest slave,

The weakest woman : all can wrong the brave. 350

“ Behold what wretches to the bed pretend

“ Of that brave chief whose bow they cou'd not bend !

“ In came a beggar of the strolling crew,

“ And did what all those princes could not do.”

Thus will the common voice our deed defame, 355

And thus posterity upbraid our name.

To whom the queen. If fame engage your views,
Forbear those acts which infamy pursues ;

v. 357. ——— *If fame engage your views,
Forbear those acts which infamy pursues.]*

This answer of Penelope is very severe and very just : Eurymachus (observes Dacier) had said, If this beggar draws the bow, we shall lose our reputation : Penelope answers, It is in vain to be solicitous about your reputation, when your lives are a series of infamous actions : fame is the reward of good, and shame the portion of base and unworthy deeds : it is no dishonour to a prince to be surpassed by a beggar in strength, but a prince is more infamous than a beggar, if his actions betray him to be a worse man ; a base action sinks him into contempt, and taints his nobility. The words in Homer are, *τί ἐλέσχεα ταῦτα τίθεσθε* ; which Eustathius thus explains ; Why do you overlook the greater dishonour, and are thus afraid of trifles ? and, adds Dacier, the sentiment is just and happy : these princes place disgrace where it is not ; they think it a shame to yield in strength to this stranger, which is really no shame ; mere strength is the praise of a beast, not of a prince : on the contrary, what is really a shame, they think to be none ; they prey upon a king, who was a friend to all mankind ; they act a thousand insolent and base deeds, and yet apprehend no discredit. This is an unhappy, and I wish it were an unjust, picture of human nature ; we deceive ourselves with false notions both of shame and glory, and we may apply the words of Terence to this purpose :

————— “ Hic, ubi opus est,

“ Non verentur : illic ubi non opus est, ibi verentur.”

Praise is only to be obtained by virtue, and fame is the certain reward of it : ill-nature or envy may eclipse it, but it will prevail and break out into glory.

Wrong and oppression no renown can raise :
 Know, friend ! that virtue is the path to praise. 360
 The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
 Speak him descended from no vulgar race.
 To him the bow, as he desires, convey ;
 And to his hand if Phœbus give the day,
 Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear 365
 A two-edg'd falchion and a shining spear,
 Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
 And safe conveyance to his port of rest.

O royal mother ! ever-honour'd name !
 Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim 370
 A son's just right. No Grecian prince but I
 Has pow'r this bow to grant, or to deny.
 Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
 And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain,
 To me alone my father's arms descend ; 375
 And mine alone they are, to give or lend.
 Retire, oh queen ! thy household task resume,
 Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom ;

v. 377. *Retire, oh queen ! &c.*] This speech has been accused of too great a liberty, and as wanting in respect from a son to a mother : Telemachus speaks with authority, when he ought to have shewed obedience and filial duty. But these critics mistake the design and intention of Telemachus ; he speaks directly to Penelope, but obliquely and intentionally to the suitors : it is for this reason that he says he is supreme in the palace, viz. to let them know that he will not give up the sway into their power. He tells Penelope that the bow shall be used as he directs ; this is done to intimidate the suitors, and prepare the way for the delivery of it to Ulysses, contrary to their injunctions to Eumæus.

The verses are the same with those in the sixth of the Iliad. There Hector speaks to Andromache, a tender husband to a fond wife, and the speech was never taxed with any want of love and kindness. In that place Hector remembers that he is an husband, yet forgets not that he is an hero. In this Telemachus deviates not from the duty of a son, yet speaks in the character and style of a prince.

Eustathius excellently enlarges upon the words of Telemachus : there is an absolute necessity that Penelope should withdraw, that she might not be present at the scene of blood and slaughter. It is

The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
These cares to man belong, and most to me.

380

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
His sage reply, and with her train retir'd :
There in her chamber as she sat apart,
Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul,
Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
'Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

385

Now thro' the press the bow Eumæus bore,
And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar.
Hold, lawless rustic ! whither wilt thou go ?
To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow ?
Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
Far from the sweet society of men,

390

for the same reason that the poet introduces Minerva casting her into a profound sleep, that she might be entirely ignorant of the death of the suitors : this is absolutely necessary ; for if she had been acquainted that Ulysses was returned, and the suitors slain by his hand, there could have been no room for the interview between Ulysses and Penelope in the succeeding parts of the *Odyssey*.

But is not Minerva introduced upon too small an occasion, only to cast Penelope into a slumber ? would not nature have worked the same effect without the assistance of the goddess ? I have already remarked, that machines are not always used out of necessity, but frequently for ornament, to dignify the poetry and create surprise by the appearance of a deity. But here the poet brings down Minerva, to give credibility to the story ; for though it be true that nature is sufficient to produce this effect, yet that it should operate in the critical and exact moment, when the poet has occasion for it, is in some degree incredible : the poet therefore to reconcile the relation to probability, introduces a præternatural sleep, occasioned by the immediate operation of a goddess.

v. 381. ——— the queen admir'd

His sage reply ———]

Penelope is amazed at the free remonstrance of Telemachus ; she is ignorant of the reason of it, yet immediately retires, not doubting but his words flowed from a just cause, and not from a want of filial duty : she is therefore said by the poet to lodge his words in her memory, waiting till time should unfold the mystery.
Dacier,

To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made; 395
If heav'n and Phœbus lend the suitors aid.

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,
But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on.
Proceed, false slave, and fling their empty words;
What? hopes the fool to please so many lords? 400
Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand
Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.
Oh! could the vigour of this arm as well
Th' oppressive suitors from my walls expel!
Then what a shoal of lawless men should go 405
To fill with tumult the dark courts below?

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
The youth, indulging in the genial day.
Eumæus, thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
The strife-full bow, and gives it to the king. 410
Old Euryclea calling then aside,
Hear what Telemachus enjoins (he cry'd)
At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
And each lock fast the well-compacted gate;

v. 407. *The suitors with a scornful smile, &c.*] Spondanus believes they laugh out of contempt of Telemachus; Dacier, because they believe the time come which is to end all their doubts by the marriage of Penelope; they hope to draw the bow, and this hope mollifies their anger. But all these reasons (as well as those of Eustathius) seem to be rather invented than natural: we may find a sufficient reason of their laughter, from the sharpness of Telemachus towards Eumæus; they rejoice to see an enemy (for such they esteem Eumæus) mis-used, and this will likewise give a reason why the poet adds, that they ceased their anger against Telemachus, namely, because he gratifies their ill-will by threatening Eumæus.

v. 412. *Hear what Telemachus enjoins, &c.*] It is very evident that this command proceeds not from Telemachus but Ulysses; it was Ulysses who gave directions to shut the door of the women's apartment; but Eumæus is ignorant that Euryclea was acquainted with the return of Ulysses, and therefore speaks as from Telemachus. He knew very well that she would obey the orders of Telemachus, but if she had not been acquainted with the return of Ulysses, she would have made some hesitation, believing the beggar to be really a stranger and not Ulysses. Eustathius.

And if unusual sounds invade their ear,
 If arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,
 Let none to call or issue forth presume,
 But close attend the labours of the loom.

Her prompt obedience on his order waits;
 Clos'd in an instant were the palace gates. 420
 In the same moment forth Philæti^{us} flies,
 Secures the court, and with a cable ties
 The utmost gate; (the cable strongly wrought
 Of Byblos' reed, a ship from Ægypt brought)
 Then unperceiv'd and silent at the board 425
 His seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.
 And now his well-known bow the master bore,
 Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er:
 Lest time or worms had done the weapon wrong,
 Its owner absent, and untry'd so long. 430

v. 423. ——— (the cable strongly wrought
 Of Byblos' reed ———]

The word in the Greek is βύβλινον, which we are not to understand of the Ægyptian papyrus, but it is derived from βίβλος or βύβλος, a plant growing in the marshes of Ægypt, βοτάνης ἐμπερῆς παπύρω, that bears the resemblance of the papyrus, as Eustathius explains it. Of this plant the antients made their cordage; on the top of it there grew fibrous threads resembling hair, and thus Strabo describes it, ψιλὴν ῥάβδος ἐπ' ἄκρα ἔχουσα χαίτην, “ a slender “ twig, bearing, as it were, hair on the top of it.”

v. 428. *Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er.*] This little particularity is not inserted in vain: Ulysses is ready to engage in a terrible combat; it is therefore very necessary to be curious in the examination of the bow, to be certain that he might depend upon it: if he had observed that it had been decayed through time, his prudence would have furnished him with some other instrument. Eustathius is of opinion that this whole bow was made of horn, because ἱπες denotes worms that breed in horn: the bow, says that author, was made of horn, and not of wood, like the Scythian bows. This it must be confessed, is not entirely satisfactory, because the bows were antiently tipt or pointed at the extremities with horn; and to this horn Ulysses may refer. But the other opinion is most probable, and Ovid thus understood it:

“ Penelope vires juvenum tentabat in arcu,
 “ Qui latus argueret corneus arcus erat.”

While some deriding—How he turns the bow!
 Some other like it sure the man must know,
 Or else wou'd copy; or in bows he deals;
 Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals.—
 Heav'n to this wretch (another cry'd) be kind!
 And blefs, in all to which he stands inclin'd, 436
 With fuch good fortune as he now fhall find.

Heedlefs he heard them; but disdain'd reply;
 The bow perufing with exacteft eye.
 Then, as fome heav'nly minftrel, taught to fing 440
 High notes responsive to the trembling ftring,
 To fome new ftrain when he adapts the lyre,
 Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,
 Relaxes, ftrains, and draws them to and fro;
 So the great mafter drew the mighty bow: 445
 And drew with eafe. One hand aloft display'd
 The bending horns, and one the ftring effay'd.
 From his effaying hand the ftring let fly
 Twang'd fhort and fharp, like the fhriU fwallow's cry.

v. 440. *Then, as fome heav'nly minftrel, &c.*] Eufthius confeffes himfelf to be greatly pleafed with this comparifon; it is very juft, and well fuitcd to the purpofe; the ftrings of the lyre reprefent the bow-ftring, and the eafe with which the lyriſt ſtretches them, admirably paints the facility with which Ulyſſes draws the bow. When fimilitudes are borrowed from an object entirely different from the ſubject which they are brought to illuſtrate, they give us a double ſatisfaction, as they ſurprife us by ſhewing an agreement between ſuch things in which there ſeems to be the greateſt diſagreement.

v. 448. ——— *the ftring let fly,*
Twang'd ſhort and ſharp, like the ſhrill ſwallow's cry.]

The comparifon is not intended to reprefent the ſweetnefs of the ſound, but only the quality and nature of it; and means a harſh or jarring ſound, or ſomewhat rough, *ὑπότραχυ*, as Eufthius interprets it; ſuch a ſound as the ſwallow makes when ſhe ſings by ſtarts, and not in one even tenour. The ſwallow is inharmonious, and Ariſtophanes uſes *χελιδόνων μερσεῖα* in his frogs, to ſignify thoſe who are enemies to the muſes; and here the poet uſes it to denote a ſhrill, harſh, or jarring ſound.

A gen'ral horror ran thro' all the race, 450
Sunk was each heart, and pale was ev'ry face.

Signs from above ensu'd : the unfolding sky
In light'ning burst ; Jove thunder'd from on high.
Fir'd at the call of heav'n's almighty lord,
He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board : 455
(Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,
But soon to fly the messengers of death.)

Now sitting as he was, the cord he drew,
Thro' ev'ry ringlet levelling his view ;
Then notch'd the shaft, releas'd, and gave it wing ;
The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string, 461 }
Sung on direct, and threaded ev'ry ring.

The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds ;
Pierc'd thro' and thro', the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince. Nor have I wrought thee shame ;
Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim ; 466
Nor prov'd the toil too hard ; nor have I lost
That antient vigour, once my pride and boast.

v. 452. *Signs from above ensu'd* —] The signal of battle is here given in thunder by Jupiter, as in the eleventh book of the Iliad.

Ev'n Jove, whose thunder spoke his wrath, distill'd
Red drops of blood o'er all the fatal field.

And again,

That instant Juno and the martial maid
In happy thunders promis'd Greece their aid.

This prepares us for the greatness of the following action, which is ushered in with thunder from heaven : and we are not surprised to see Ulysses defeat his enemies, when Jupiter declares himself in his favour. Homer calls this thunder a sign and a prodigy : it is a sign, because it predicts the event ; and a prodigy, because the thunder proceeds from a serene sky. Eustathius.

v. 467. ————— nor have I lost
That antient vigour —]

Ulysses speaks not thus out of vanity, but solely to confirm the courage of Telemachus, and his two friends, Eumæus and Philætius. He sets his vigour before their eyes, that they may have confidence in it in the succeeding engagement.

Ill I deserv'd these haughty peers disdain;
 Now let them comfort their dejected train, 470
 In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait 'till ev'ning for the genial joy:
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night;
 Music, the banquet's most refin'd delight.

He said, then gave a nod; and at the word 475
 Telemachus girds on his shining sword.
 Fast by his father's side he takes his stand;
 The beamy jav'lin lightens in his hand.

v. 471. *In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait 'till ev'ning —*]

This circumstance is very necessary; Ulysses excites the suitors to supper by day-light, because it would be more easy for him to assault them while they sat at table; the posture would give him some advantage; and he adds "before evening," because if they had supped by the light of the torch, upon extinguishing it, they had greatly embarrassed him, and perhaps rendered his designs ineffectual through the benefit of the darkness. Neither is it without reason that he proposes singing and music; he does it to draw away their thoughts from any jealousy of intended violence; and by this method he gives the assault unexpectedly, and begins the slaughter before they are prepared to make any opposition.

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK XXII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The death of the suitors.

Ulysses begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus and Philætius. Melanthius does the same for the woers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Phemius are spared. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

THEN fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode;
Stript of his rags, he blaz'd out like a god.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store;

* We are now come to the great event or catastrophe of the Odyssey, which is the destruction of the suitors. The manner by which the poet conducts it, has been praised and censured, by some as noble and heroic, by others as romantic and incredible: it is therefore highly necessary to vindicate Homer, in the chief action of the whole poem, that he may not be found culpable, in the place where he ought to be the most exact, and draw his hero to the best advantage. The objection made against this decisive action is, that the poet makes Ulysses perform impossibilities; no one person, with such small assistance, being able to destroy above an hundred enemies. It is no answer to say that Pallas descends to aid Ulysses, for it has been already proved, that all incidents which require a divine probability, should be so disengaged from the action, that they may be subtracted from it without destroying

Before his feet the rattling show'r he threw, 5
And thus terrific, to the suitor crew.

it; whereas this action is essential to it. No less a critic than Longinus, chap. vii. condemns Homer; for, enumerating the faults of the *Odyssey*, he thus proceeds: "To these may be added
" the absurdities he commits, in the account of the destruction
" of Penelope's suitors." And Scaliger, lib. v. of his *Poetics*, is of the same opinion: "Ulysses interfecit arcu procos, inter
" quos & ipsum tantillum esset intervalli: quare omnes simul in
" eum impetum non fecerunt?" The strength of this objection lies in the omission of the suitors in not rushing at once upon Ulysses in an united body: now this was impossible, he stood upon the threshold in a narrow pass, and by this advantage he was able to make it good against a great inequality of numbers. It is not difficult to bring instances of a like nature from undoubted history: Cocles alone defended the bridge over the Tyber against the whole army of Porfena, and stood unmoveable till the Romans broke it down behind him. And Leonidas the Spartan general defended the pass of Thermopylæ with a small number, against three millions of Persians led by Xerxes; and if he had not been betrayed, he would have probably defeated his whole army. In both these instances there was a greater inequality of numbers, than between Ulysses and the suitors. The reader will be reconciled to the probability of these relations, if he considers that the whole business of war was antiently decided by mere strength of body: fire-arms now set all men upon a nearer level; but in these early ages, the strongest person was the greatest hero; a man of superiour and uncommon strength drove his enemies before him like an army of boys, and with as much facility. From this observation it is evident, that Homer scarce transgresses the bounds of historic truth, when he describes Achilles chasing whole squadrons of Trojans: he wrote according to the manners of his times, and drew after the life, though sometimes he improved a feature to give grace to the picture of his hero: thus in the scripture, from the mere advantage of strength, we see a single Goliath defy the whole armies of Israel.

Rapin commends the conduct of Homer in bringing about the destruction of the suitors. The unravelling the whole *Odyssey* (says that author) by their deaths, is very great, and very becoming an hero; that whole story is dressed up in colours so decent, and at the same time so noble, that antiquity can hardly match any part of the narration; here Homer has displayed himself to the best advantage. I wish Rapin had given his reasons, and not run into a general commendation: but we should be sufficiently convinced of the judgment of Homer in describing the suitors falling chiefly by Ulysses, if we consider the nature of epic poetry. The chief action is to be performed by the hero of the poem: thus Hector falls by Achilles, Turnus by Æneas: the death

One vent'rous game this hand has won to-day,
Another, princes! yet remains to play;

of the suitors is the chief action of the *Odyssey*, and therefore it is necessary to be executed by Ulysses; for if any other person had performed it, that person would have done an action more noble than the hero of the poem, and eclipsed his glory. It is for the same reason that the poet refuses all easy methods to re-establish Ulysses: he throws him into difficulties which he is to surmount by his own prowess and magnanimity. Homer might easily have raised an army, and placed Ulysses at the head of it; but the more difficult way being most conducive to his honour, he rejects all easy methods, shews him struggling with infinite hazards, out of which he extricates himself personally by his wisdom and courage. By this means he compleats the character of his hero, leaves a noble image of his worth upon the minds of the spectators, and makes him go off the stage with the utmost applause.

v. 1. *Then fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode, &c.*] Plato was particularly struck with the beauty of these lines: in his dialogue intituled *Ion*, p. 145. Socrates thus speaks: "When you repeat the verses of Homer emphatically, and ravish the whole audience, whether it be the passage where he sings how Ulysses leaps upon the threshold, discovers himself to the suitors, and pours his arrows before his feet: or where Achilles rushes upon Hector; or where he paints the lamentations of Hecuba, Priam, or Andromache; tell me, are you any longer master of your own passions? Are you not transported and ravished with divine fury; think yourself present at the very actions, either in Ithaca or Troy?" It must indeed be allowed, that Homer here paints to the life; we see Ulysses, his motion, his attitude, and the noble fury with which he begins the onset. The poet interests us in the cause of his hero, and we fight on his side against his enemies.

Eustathius observes, that instead of *ράχ* the Æolians wrote *βράχ*; an observation of too little importance to have been regarded, if he had not given us a fragment of Sappho as a proof of it.

Τὴς δ' ἀγροῖῳτις θέλγει νοὸν
Οὐκ ἐπισαμένη τὰ βράκεια ἔλκειο
Ἐπὶ τῶν σφυρῶν;

which he thus explains:

What rustic beauty drest in awkward charms
Detains my lover from his Sappho's arms?

The circumstance of throwing the arrows before his feet is not inserted without a reason; Ulysses could reach them from thence

Another mark our arrow must attain.

Phœbus assist! nor be the labour vain.

10

Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,

And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings:

Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!

High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl!

Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath;

15

Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death:

For fate who fear'd amidst a feastful band?

And fate to numbers, by a single hand?

Full thro' his throat Ulysses' weapon past,

And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his last,

with more facility and expedition, than if they had hung at his shoulder in the quiver.

v. 10. *Phœbus assist!*———] Ulysses addresses a prayer to Apollo to give success to his present enterprise; he directs it to him, because he is the god of archery; and he concludes in four words, in compliance with the exigence of the time, which will not permit him to speak at large. This prayer to Apollo confirms my observation, that Penelope proposed the trial of the bow in honour of that deity, and we find that it was customary from a remarkable passage in the Iliad, lib. iv.

But first to speed thy shaft, address thy vow

To Lycian Phœbus with the silver bow:

And swear the firstlings of the flock to pay

On Zelia's altars, to the god of day.

It is from the urgency of the time that the speech of Ulysses, as well as the prayer, is concise: it would have been very injudicious, when he was ready to assault his enemies unexpectedly, to have prefaced the onset with a long oration; this would have given them an alarm, and time to make an opposition.

v. 18. *And fate to numbers, by a single band?*] This particular is very artful: the poet while he writes, seems to be surprised at the difficulty of the enterprise he is about to relate. He is in doubt of the great event, and stands still in admiration of it. This has a double effect; it sets the courage of Ulysses in a strong point of light, who executes what might be almost thought an impossibility; and at the same time it excellently contributes to make the story credible; for Homer appears to be held in suspense by the greatness of the action; an intimation that nothing but the real truth and deference to veracity could extort from him a belief of it: thus by seeming to make the relation improbable, the poet establishes the probability of it. Eustathius.

The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows, 21
 A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose;
 Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls:
 Before him spurn'd, the loaded table falls,
 And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood 25
 Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
 Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
 Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall;
 O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye,
 Each look'd for arms: in vain; no arms were nigh:
 Aim'ft thou at princes? (all amaz'd they said) 31
 Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd;
 Thy erring shaft hast made our bravest bleed,
 And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed.
 Vultures shall tear thee—Thus incens'd they spoke. 35
 While each to chance ascrib'd the wond'rous stroke,

v. 22. *A stream of gore burst spouting* ———] The word in the original is αὐλὸς, which commonly signifies a pipe or musical instrument: the antients (observes Eustathius) used it to denote a fountain; here therefore it implies a flux or fountain of blood; κρηνὸς ἐξακόντισμα αἵματος, the word therefore very happily paints the blood spouting from the nostrils, as from a fountain; and in this sense, it gives us a full image of the nature of the wound; the blood sprung as from a pipe, through the mouth of the wound, or from the veins, through the nostrils.

v. 35. ——— *Thus incens'd they spoke,*
While each to chance ascrib'd the wond'rous stroke.]

This passage was looked upon as spurious by the antients; for they thought it impossible that all the suitors should speak the same sentiment, as by compact, like a chorus in a tragedy: they appealed to the custom of Homer himself, who continually wrote

ὦδε τις εἶπεν.

Eustathius answers, that the poet speaks thus confusedly, to represent the confusion of the suitors at the death of Antinous. Dacier defends him by saying, that all the suitors imagined that Antinous was slain by accident, and therefore the whole assembly having the same sentiment, the poet might ascribe to every member of it the same expression. Either of these solutions explains the difficulty.

Blind as they were; for death ev'n now invades
 His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
 Then grimly frowning with a dreadful look,
 That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke. 40

Dogs, ye have had your day; ye fear'd no more
 Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore;
 While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
 Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay:
 Not so content, with bolder frenzy fir'd, 45
 Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspir'd:
 Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
 Or shame of men, or dread of gods above:
 Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
 Or fame's eternal voice in future days: 50
 The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come,
 Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.

Thus dreadful he. Confus'd the suitors stood,
 From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood;
 Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide, 55
 Alone the bold Eurymachus reply'd.

If, as thy words impart, (he thus began)
 Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,
 Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sustain'd
 In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land; 60
 The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
 Lo! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.
 Not love, but wild ambition was his guide;
 To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,
 These were his aims; but juster Jove deny'd. 65 }

v. 42. *Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore.*] The mention of the return of Ulysses from Troy is not inserted casually: he speaks thus to intimidate his enemies, by recalling to their minds all the brave actions that he performed before it. Were not this his intention, he would have varied his expression, for in reality he has been absent from Troy near ten years, and returns from the Phæacian, not the Trojan shores. Eustathius.

v. 64. *To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide.*] This expression is judiciously inserted, and with good reason put into the mouth of

Since cold in death th' offender lies; oh spare
 Thy suppliant people, and receive their pray'r!
 Brass, gold, and treasures shall the spoil defray,
 Two hundred oxen ev'ry prince shall pay:
 The waste of years refunded in a day.

70 }

'Till then thy wrath is just—Ulysses burn'd
 With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd.

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
 Before your rapines, join'd with all your own.
 If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call;

75

'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all;
 Your blood is my demand, your lives the prize,
 'Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.

Hence with those coward terms; or fight, or fly;
 This choice is left ye, to resist or die;

80

one of the suitors, namely Eurymachus. The poet is now punishing them for their crimes; it is therefore very necessary that the reader should be satisfied that they deserve punishment; for if it be not an act of justice, it is murder. The poet therefore brings them all confessing themselves guilty by the mouth of Eurymachus; their crime is the intended murder of Telemachus, and the usurpation of the throne of Ulysses. If this had not been set in a clear light, there might have been room for a suspicion that Ulysses inflicted a punishment too great for the guilt of the suitors. For was it a crime that deserved death, to aim at the marriage of Penelope? This is not to be supposed; for they took her to be a widow, and might therefore without a crime ask her in marriage. Was death due for the waste and profusion of the riches of Ulysses? This might have been redressed, by a full repayment, and a just equivalent. Homer therefore, to shew that there is a cause for the severity of the punishment, sets their crimes in open view, which are an intentional murder, and an actual treason. The place likewise where he inserts this circumstance is well chosen, viz. in the place where the punishment is related; and by this method we acknowledge the equity of it. It is true; Eurymachus throws the guilt upon Antinous as the chief offender; but all the suitors have been his associates, and approved of all his violent and bloody designs through the Odyssey, and therefore are justly involved in the same punishment; so that Ulysses punishes rebellious subjects by the authority of a king. Homer likewise observes justice in the death of Antinous; he is the first in guilt, and the first that falls by his hero's hands.

And die I trust ye shall.—He sternly spoke:
 With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.
 Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train:
 Yon' archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain;
 But from the threshold shall his darts be sped, 85
 (Who-e'er he be) 'till ev'ry prince lie dead.
 Be mindful of yourselves, draw forth your swords,
 And to his shafts obtend these ample boards,
 (So need compels.) Then, all united strive
 The bold invader from his post to drive; 90
 The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste,
 And this mad archer soon have shot his last.

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor sword,
 And like a lion rush'd against his lord:
 The wary chief the rushing foe repress, 95
 Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast:
 His failing hand deserts the lifted sword,
 And prone he falls extended o'er the board!
 Before him wide, in mix'd effusion roll
 Th' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl. 100
 Full thro' his liver pass'd the mortal wound,
 With dying rage his forehead beats the ground,
 He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
 And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.

v. 88. *And to his shafts obtend these ample boards.*] Eurymachus exhorts the suitors to make use of the tables to oppose Ulysses in the manner of shields; from whence observes Eustathius, it may be gathered that every suitor had a peculiar table. This may be confirmed from this book; for when Antinous falls, he overturns a table; which, if there had been but one, would have been too large to be thus overthrown; besides he speaks in the plural number, *τραπέζας*.

v. 91. *The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste.*] It is impossible but that the suitors must have many friends amongst the Ithacans. Interest or ill-humour engages men in faction; but this is not the full import of the sense of Homer: the Ithacans were ignorant that Ulysses was returned, and no wonder therefore if they engaged in defence of the princes of their land, against a stranger and a beggar; for such in appearance was Ulysses.

Next bold Amphinomus his arms extends 105

To force the pass: the god-like man defends.

Thy spear, Telemachus! prevents th' attack,

The brazen weapon driving thro' his back,

Thence thro' his breast its bloody passage tore; } 110

Flat falls he thund'ring on the marble floor, }

And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore. }

He left his jav'lin in the dead, for fear

The long incumbrance of the weighty spear

To the fierce foe advantage might afford,

To rush between and use the shorten'd sword. 115

With speedy ardour to his fire he flies,

And, Arm, great father! arm (in haste he cries)

v. 108. *The brazen weapon driving thro' his back.*] Eustathius, and Spondanus from him, interpret this passage very much to the disadvantage of the courage of Telemachus: they observe that he is yet new to the horrors of war, and therefore wanting the heart to meet his enemy in the front, gives him this wound between the shoulders: that as soon as he has given the blow, out of fear he leaves the spear in the wound; an action as disreputable, as to throw away the shield in battle; and lastly, that it is fear that suggests to his mind the expedient to fetch the arms, a pretext to be distant from danger. But it is not difficult to defend Telemachus. Amphinomus was assaulting Ulysses, and consequently his back was turned towards Telemachus, and this occasions the wound in that part. This combat is not a combat of honour, where points of ceremony are observed; Telemachus was therefore at liberty to destroy his enemy by any methods, without any imputation of cowardice; especially considering the inequality of the parties. Neither is it out of fear that he quits his spear; but from a dictate of wisdom: he is afraid lest some of the suitors should attack him while he is disengaging it, and take him at an advantage, while he has no weapon to use in his own defence; besides, he has no farther occasion for it; he hastes away to provide other arms, not only for himself, but for Ulysses and his friends; and this is so far from being the suggestion of fear, that it is the result of wisdom.

There is some difficulty in the expression *προσπρήνει τὴν ψαῆν*, the meaning of it is, lest he should receive a descending blow: the word is an adjective, and Eustathius tells us, that *χαρὶ* is to be understood; I should rather chuse *παρυάτω*, which immediately precedes, it being as good sense to say, a wound is given by a descending sword, as a descending hand.

v. 117. ——— arm (in haste he cries).] Homer almost con-

Lo hence I run for other arms to wield,
 For missile jav'ins, and for helm and shield;
 Fast by our side let either faithful swain 120
 In arms attend us, and their part sustain.

Haste and return (Ulysses made reply)
 While yet th' auxiliar shafts this hand supply;
 Left thus alone, encounter'd by an host,
 Driv'n from the gate, th' important pass be lost. 125

With speed Telemachus obeys, and flies
 Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies;
 Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
 And four broad bucklers, to his fire he bears:
 At once in brazen panoply they shone, 130
 At once each servant brac'd his armour on;
 Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
 While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand:
 Chief after chief expir'd at ev'ry wound,
 And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground.
 Soon as his store of flying fates was spent, 136
 Against the wall he set the bow unbent:

stantly gives the epithet *πτερόεντα* to *ἔπεα*; "winged words." Plutarch in his treatise upon Garrulity gives us the meaning of it. A word (says that author) while it remains unspoken is a secret, but being communicated, it changes its name into common rumour; it is then "flown" from us; and this is the reason why Homer calls words "winged:" he that lets a bird fly from his hand, does not easily catch it again; and he that lets a word slip from his tongue cannot recall it; it flies abroad, and flutters from place to place every moment. It has indeed in some passages a still closer meaning; when a person speaks with precipitation, the epithet expresses the swiftness of the speech, the words are winged: it is here applied with particular propriety; Telemachus asks a question in the compass of four lines, and receives an answer in two from Ulysses; the time not allowing any delay.

v. 137. *Against the wall he set the bow unbent.*] The poet may be thought too circumstantial in the disposal of the bow; but there is a reason for it; he shews Ulysses placed it out of the reach of the suitors, who, if they had seized the bow, might have furnished themselves with arrows from the dead bodies of their friends, and employed them against Ulysses: this caution was therefore necessary. Eustathius.

And now his shoulders bear the massy shield,
 And now his hands two beamy jav'lines wield:
 He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd
 O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade. 141

There stood a window near, whence looking down
 From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.

v. 142. *There stood a window near, whence looking down
 From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.]*

The word in the Greek is ὀρθοθύρη, “janua superior,” and it is likewise used a little lower. It has given great trouble to the commentators to explain the situation of these two passages. Dacier imagines that by the former there was a descent into the court-yard, and so to the street; but this cannot be true: for Agelaus exhorting his associates to seize this passage, makes use of the word ἀναβαίνειν, which signifies to “ascend,” and not to “descend” into the court-yard: besides, he bids them raise the people by “shouting to them,” which seems to imply, that this place overlooked the streets, from whence a shout might be heard by the people. ὀρθοθύρη (observes Eustathius) is θύρη εἰς ἣν ὄρνυται τὶς δέλων ἰδεῖν ἐκεῖθεν, that is, “a door by which a person ascends to “obtain a prospect.” This probably led to the roof of the porch of the palace fronting the street, from whence a person standing in the open air, and shouting, might raise the city; or as for greater clearness it is here translated a window, which answers all these purposes.

But there is still a difficulty arising from the word λαύρην, which is thus solved by Eustathius, λαύρη ἐστὶν ὁ περὶ τὴν ὀρθοθύρην ἄγων στενωπός, that is, a narrow passage leading to this private window or door, and he afterwards interprets it by στενὴ ὁδός.

From what has been observed, it appears evidently that there was another passage to the upper apartments of the palace; for this was guarded by Eumæus, and was inaccessible, and consequently Melanthius conveys the arms to the suitors by some other stair-case. This Homer expresses by ἀναρρώγας μισγάροιο; the former word is very well explained by Hesychius, it signifies the passages of the palace leading from chamber to chamber, or the διόδοι of the apartments. Πῶγῃ properly denotes a rupture, and here represents the openings of the passages from room to room. The ancients thought this whole passage so obscure, that they drew a plan of these inward passages of the palace, as Eustathius informs us; in this they figured the porch, the higher aperture, the other stair-case, and the room where the arms were laid. But Dacier starts another difficulty: if Melanthius could go up to the room where the arms lay, why could he not go from thence into the courts of the palace, and raise the city? The answer is, because he arms were placed in an inward apartment, and there was no

A double strength of valves secur'd the place,
 A high and narrow, but the only pass : 145
 The cautious king, with all preventing care,
 To guard that outlet, plac'd Eumæus there :
 When Agelaüs thus : Has none the sense
 To mount yon' window, and alarm from thence
 The neighbour town ? the town shall force the door,
 And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more. 151

Melanthius then : That outlet to the gate
 So near adjoins, that one may guard the straight.
 But other methods of defence remain,
 Myself with arms can furnish all the train ; 155
 Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
 And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.

He said ; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
 Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears :
 All arm, and sudden round the hall appears 160
 A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty woe,
 On ev'ry side he sees the labour grow :
 Oh curst event ! and oh unlook'd-for aid !
 Melanthius or the women have betray'd — 165

passage from thence into the palace-yards. Her mistake arose from her opinion that there was an entry into the palace by the *ὑποθύρη*, which opinion is refuted in the beginning of this annotation. If indeed Telemachus had brought down the arms this way, then there must have been a passage for Melanthius to the place from whence Agelaüs bids him raise the city ; for if Telemachus had passed to the armoury by it, why might not Melanthius from it ? But this is not the case ; for this door or window is not mentioned till Telemachus has furnished Ulysses and his friends with armour ; and consequently Homer cannot intend that we should understand that Telemachus ascended to the armoury by it.

v. 159. *Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears.* Aristarchus, remarks Eustathius, blamed this description as incredible ; for how could one person be able to carry such a load of armour at one time ? But we are not to make this supposition ; the poet speaks indefinitely, and leaves us at liberty to conjecture that Melanthius brought them at several times ; thus a little lower we find him going again for arms to furnish the rest of the suitors,

Oh my dear son!—The father with a sigh!
Then ceas'd; the filial virtue made reply.

Falshood is folly, and 'tis just to own
The fault committed; this was mine alone;
My haste neglected yonder door to bar, 170
And hence the villain has supply'd their war.
Run good Eumæus then, and (what before
I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door:
Learn if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son. 175

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain,
Not unobserv'd. Eumæus watchful ey'd,
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side.

The miscreant we suspected takes that way; 180
Him, if this arm be pow'rful, shall I slay?
Or drive him hither, to receive the meed
From thy own hand, of this detested deed?

v. 172. *Run good Eumæus, &c.*] This passage, where Telemachus bids Eumæus go and see who brings the arms, proves that Telemachus did not before absent himself from the battle out of cowardice: here he chuses to partake the danger with Ulysses, and sends Eumæus and Philætius to execute his orders; a sign that he does not consult his safety at the expence of his honour. Eustathius.

But it may seem extraordinary, that Ulysses and Telemachus should be in doubt to know the person who brought the arms to the suitors; especially when Agelaus had held a public conference with Melanthius in order to it; but, answers Eustathius, they spoke with a low voice, and at a proper distance from Ulysses. It may also be objected, that Melanthius could not possibly bring the arms without the observation of Ulysses and his friends. To solve this difficulty we must have recourse to the second private door, or *ὑποθύρα*, mentioned in a former annotation: by this passage he ascends and descends without a discovery; that passage standing in such a situation, as not to be visible to those who were on the opposite side of the palace. What may seem to contradict this observation is, what Homer afterwards adds, for he directly tells us, that Eumæus observed that the person who brought the arms was Melanthius; but that expression may only imply, that he saw Melanthius going from the rest of the company, and hastening towards that ascent, and therefore justly concludes him to be the person.

Not so (reply'd Ulysses) leave him there,
For us sufficient is another care: 185

Within the stricture of this palace wall
To keep inclos'd his masters 'till they fall.
Go you and seize the felon; backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind;
On this, his body by strong cords extend, 190 }
And on a column near the roof suspend;
So study'd tortures his vile days shall end. }

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste,
Behind the felon unperceiv'd they past,
As round the room in quest of arms he goes: 195
(The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes)
One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,
Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapt and worn,
The brass corroded, and the leather torn: 200

v. 187. *To keep inclos'd his masters ———*] It may be asked, when Eumæus retires from the guard of the passage, what hinders the suitors from seizing it, and by it giving notice to the city of their danger? What Ulysses here says obviates this objection. He tells Eumæus, that he and Telemachus will defend it against all the efforts of his enemies: by this expression he gives us to understand, that Telemachus shall post himself in the place of Eumæus, and make it good till he has executed justice upon Melanthius.

v. 197. *One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield.*] We see Melanthius after a diligent search finds only one helm and one shield; and the shield is described as almost spoiled with age: from hence Eustathius gathers that there were no more left in the armoury; for it is probable that Melanthius would not have returned with so few arms if he could have found more; nor would he have brought the decayed shield, if he could have supplied himself with a stronger; so that all the arms of Ulysses were seventeen helmets, twelve at first delivered to the suitors by Melanthius, one more he was now bringing, and Ulysses and his friends were in possession of four: there were the same number of shields, and twenty spears, twelve given to the suitors, and eight to the assistants of Ulysses. This was his private armoury for the defence of his palace: and we are not to conclude, that these were the whole arms of the nation; there probably was a public repository for armour for the public use of their armies against their enemies.

Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he slept,
Fierce on the villain from each side they leapt,
Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
And down reluctant on the pavement threw.

Active and pleas'd, the zealous swains fulfil 205

At ev'ry point their master's rigid will :

First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound,

Then streighten'd cords involv'd his body round :

So drawn aloft, athwart the column ty'd,

The howling felon swung from side to side. 210

Eumæus scoffing then with keen disdain :

There pass thy pleasing night, oh gentle swain !

On that soft pillow, from that envy'd height

First may'st thou see the springing dawn of light ;

So timely rise, when morning streaks the east, 215

To drive thy victims to the suitors feast.

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay,

Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away :

Each, breathing death, resum'd his dang'rous post

Near great Ulysses ; four against an host. 200

When lo ! descending to her hero's aid

Jove's daughter Pallas, war's triumphant maid :

In Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side ;

Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cry'd.

Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend ; 225

Oh ev'ry sacred name in one ! my friend !

Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown :

Whate'er thro' life's whole series I have done

Or good, or grateful, now to mind recall,

And aiding this one hour, repay it all. 230

Thus he ; but pleasing hopes his bosom warm

Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.

The adverse host the phantom warrior ey'd,

And first loud threat'ning, Agelaüs cry'd.

Mentor beware, nor let that tongue persuade 235

Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid ;

Our force successful shall our threat make good,
 And with the fire's and son's commix thy blood.
 What hop'st thou here? Thee first the sword shall slay,
 Then lop thy whole posterity away; 240
 Far hence thy banish'd consort shall we send;
 With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend;
 Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend. }

His barb'rous insult ev'n the goddess fires,
 Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires. 245

Art thou Ulysses? where then shall we find
 The patient body and the constant mind?
 That courage, once the Trojans daily dread,
 Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead?
 And where that conduct, which reveng'd the lust 250
 Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust?
 If this, when Helen was the cause, were done;
 What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son?
 Rise then in combat, at my side attend;
 Observe what vigour gratitude can lend, 255
 And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend! }

v. 246. *Art thou Ulysses? &c.*] Pallas is here an allegorical deity, and represents the courage and wisdom which was exerted by Ulysses in the destruction of the suitors: the poet puts the words into the mouth of a goddess, to give ornament and dignity to his poetry; but they are only the suggestions of his own heart, which reproaches him for being so slow in punishing the insolence of his adversaries. If we take them in this sense they will be in the nature of a soliloquy: the poet indeed was obliged to introduce a deity, to give importance to the decisive action of his whole poem: thus Jupiter assists Æneas in Virgil; Minerva, Achilles in the Iliad, and the same goddess Ulysses here in the Odyssey. I very well know that all these passages have been blamed by some critics, as derogatory to the courage of these heroes, who cannot conquer their enemies but through the assistance of a deity. The reader may be pleased to look back for a full vindication of Homer and Virgil, to lib. iii. note on v. 481. of the Odyssey.

We may observe that a deity descends to assist Ulysses, but that the suitors are left to their own conduct: this furnishes us with a very just and pious moral, and teaches us that heaven guards and assists good men in adversity, but abandons the wicked, and lets them perish for their follies.

She spoke; but willing longer to survey
 The fire and son's great acts, with-held the day;
 By farther toils decreed the brave to try,
 And level pois'd the wings of victory : 260
 Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
 Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
 And unperceiv'd, enjoys the rising fight. }

Damastor's son, bold Agelaüs, leads
 The guilty war; Eurynomus succeeds ; 265
 With these, Pisander great Polyctor's son,
 Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,
 With Demoptolemus : these six survive;
 The best of all, the shafts had left alive.
 Amidst the carnage desp'rate as they stand, 270
 Thus Agelaüs rous'd the lagging band.

The hour is come, when yon' fierce man no more
 With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor :
 Lo! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast ;
 The four remain, but four against an host. 275
 Let each at once discharge the deadly dart,
 One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart :

¶. 262. *Perch'd like a swallow* ———] We have seen the deities, both in the Iliad and Odyssey, changing themselves into the shape of birds : thus lib. vii. v. 67. of the Iliad,

Th' Athenian maid, and glorious god of day
 With silent joy the settling hosts survey,
 In form like vultures, on the beech's height
 They sit conceal'd, and wait the future fight.

This perhaps may be the occasion of all such fictions. The superstition of the heathen world induced the antients to believe that the appearance of any bird in a critical hour was a sign of the presence of a divinity, and by degrees they began to persuade themselves, that the gods appeared to them in the form of those birds. Hence arose all the honours paid to augurs, and the reliance upon divination drawn from the flight of birds ; and almost every deity had a bird sacred to him. The eagle to Jupiter, the peacock to Juno, &c. Pallas here takes the form of a swallow, because it is a domestic bird, and therefore may be said to appear within the walls of the palace with most probability.

'Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain :

The rest must perish, their great leader slain.

Then all at once their mingled lances threw, 280

And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew ;

In vain ! Minerva turn'd them with her breath,

And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death ;

With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,

One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls ; 285

The storm past innocent. The god-like man

Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began.

'Tis now (brave friends) our turn, at once to throw

(So speed 'em heav'n) our jav'lines at the foe.

That impious race to all their past misdeeds 290

Would add our blood. Injustice still proceeds.

He spoke : at once their fiery lances flew :

Great Demoptolemus, Ulysses flew ;

Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart ;

The goatherd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart ; 295

Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumæus, falls ;

Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.

The rest retreat : the victors now advance,

Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.

Again the foe discharge the steely show'r ; 300

Again made frustrate by the virgin-pow'r.

Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall,

Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall ;

Some weak, or pond'rous with the brazen head,

Drop harmless, on the pavement sounding dead. 305

v. 298. ——— — *the victors now advance,*

Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.]

The danger beginning to abate by the fall of the chief of the enemy, Ulysses advances from his stand : there was a necessity for this conduct : Ulysses and his three assistants had killed four enemies with their spears ; and consequently the poet was obliged to supply them with fresh weapons, otherwise, if they had discharged their spears once more, they must have been left naked and defenceless, having only two a-piece brought by Telemachus. This observation shews the exactness which Homer maintains in his relation.

Then bold Amphimedon his jav'lin cast ;
 Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly raz'd :
 And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd
 On good Eumæus' shield and shoulder glanc'd ;
 Not lessen'd of their force (so slight the wound) 310
 Each fung along, and dropp'd upon the ground.
 Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamus, to bear
 Thy death, ennobl'd by Ulysses' spear.
 By the bold son Amphimedon was slain :
 And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain. 315
 Pierc'd thro' the breast the rude Ctesippus bled,
 And thus Philætiüs gloried o'er the dead.

There end thy pompous vaunts and high disdain ;
 Oh sharp in scandal, voluble and vain !
 How weak is mortal pride ! To heav'n alone 320
 Th' event of actions and our fates are known :
 Scoffer, behold what gratitude we bear :
 The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
 And Damastorides that instant fell ; 325
 Fast-by Leocritus expiring lay,
 The prince's jav'lin tore its bloody way
 Thro' all his bowels : down he tumbles prone,
 His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

v. 323. *The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.*] This refers to a passage in the latter end of the twentieth book of the Odyssey, where Ctesippus throws the foot of a bullock at Ulysses. Philætiüs here gives him a mortal wound with his spear, and tells him it is a return for the foot of the bullock. Eustathius informs us, that this became a proverb, *τὸ τοῦ ἀντὶ ποδοῦ ξεινήιον*, to express a return of evil for evil ; the like may be observed of the death of Antinous, who was killed as he lifted the bowl to drink.

Πολλὰ μεταξὺ πέλει κύλινος καὶ χεῖλεος ἄκρα.

Which is exactly rendered by our proverb, “ Many things happen “ between the cup and the lip.” Thus likewise the kindness of Cyclops was used proverbially, to denote a severe injury disguised under a seeming civility ; that monster having promised Ulysses mercy, but it was only the mercy to devour him last. These little instances prove the great veneration the antients had for Homer.

Now Pallas shines confess'd; aloft she spreads 330
 The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads;
 The dreadful ægis blazes in their eye;
 Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and they fly:
 Confus'd, distracted, thro' the rooms they fling,
 Like oxen madden'd by the breese's sting, 335
 When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle spring. }

v. 332. *The dreadful ægis* ——— ———] This shield is at large described, lib. v. of the Iliad.

———— round the margin roll'd,
 A fringe of serpents, hissing, guard the gold:
 Here all the terrors of grim war appear;
 Here rages force, here tremble flight and fear;
 Here storm'd contention, and here fury frown'd,
 And the dire orb portentous Gorgon crown'd.

We see the terrible effects which the shield causes are created by the poet into a kind of beings, and animated to fight on the side of his hero.

v. 335. *Like oxen, &c.*] The fury of the battle being now over, Homer pauses with the action; and letting his fancy rove in search of foreign ornaments, beautifies and enlivens the horrors of it with two similitudes, drawn from subjects very distant from the terrors they are brought to illustrate. The former of an herd of cattle, represents the confusion and affright of the suitors; the latter of the birds, their weakness and unavailing flight. The gadfly shews the fury and close pursuit of Ulysses and his assistants, the hawks their courage, and superiour power. Eustathius. Virgil at large describes this breese-fly. Georg. iii.

About th' Alburnian groves, with holly green,
 Of winged insects mighty swarms are seen:
 This flying plague, to mark its quality,
 Oestros the Grecians call, Afilus, we:
 A fierce loud buzzing breese: their stings draw blood;
 And drive the cattle gadding thro' the wood,
 Seiz'd with unusual pains they loudly cry, &c. Dryden.

This description shews that it is no ill-chosen similitude; it very well paints the suitors flying in an herd, and Ulysses wounding them as they fly.

The latter simile from the hawks, affords some curiosity in regard to the antient manner of that sport. It is evident, says Dacier, that this passage is an instance, that flying of birds of prey, in the nature of our hawking, was practised by the antients: the nets, called by Homer *νέφρα*, were fixed in the plain ground; the fowlers with their falcons took their station upon the adjoining

Not half so keen, fierce vultures of the chace
 Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race,
 When, the wide field extended snares beset,
 With conscious dread they shun the quiv'ring net: 340
 No help, no flight: but wounded ev'ry way,
 Headlong they drop: the fowlers seize the prey.

eminences; when the birds, driven from this rising ground, flew to the plain, they met with the nets, and endeavouring to escape them, crowded into flocks: then the hawk or vulture was loosed, and descending upon his prey, slew them in multitudes; for the birds were incapable of resisting, and at the same time were afraid of the nets, and therefore could not escape: this is the reason why the fowlers are said to rejoice at the sport: a plain indication, that the poet intended to describe the sportsman's flying his bird at the prey. That the word νέφεα signifies "nets," is evident from Aristophanes, *μὰ νεφέλας, μὰ δίκτυα*, that is, "I swear by my nets:" Hesychius is of the same opinion, νέφεα, says that author, signifies the "clouds," καὶ λῖνα θηρατικὰ, "hunters nets." Eustathius directly affirms, that in his time this sport was practised in many countries; and the place where the nets were fixed was called νεφελοσασία. That author construes these words νέφεα πλώσσειν αἰνῆσαι, as if ἐπὶ were to be understood, to express the rushing of the birds against the net; but there is no occasion for this violence to the text, for by joining νέφεα with πλώσσειν, the period will be plain, and signify, that through fear of the net they fly with violence to avoid it. Monsieur Dacier has a pretty observation upon this sport; and shews us that the antients were used to take even deer with nets, by flying at them birds of prey, in conformity to this description of Homer: this is manifest from a passage in Arrian, lib. ii. c. i. where he speaks of men placing their fears where they have nothing to fear: *Λοιπὸν, ἡμεῖς τὸ τῶν ἐλάφων πάσχομεν· ὅτε φοβῆναι φεύγειν αἱ ἐλαφοὶ τὰ πλῆνᾶ, πῶς τρέπονται; καὶ πρὸς τινὰ (τόπον) ἀναχωρεῖσιν ὡς ἀσφαλῆ; πρὸς τὰ δίκτυα, καὶ ὕτως ἀπόλλυνται, ἐναλλάξασαι τὰ φοβερά καὶ τὰ θαρράλεια.* "For what remains, we are like deer, for they fearing the birds that are flown at them, what course do they take? To what place of refuge do they run to be in security? To the nets, and so perish, mistaking their danger for their greatest safety." Minerva, in this similitude, is the bird of prey descending from the mountain; for she it is who scatters the suitors by displaying her ægis from the roof of the palace: this is the opinion of Eustathius: but in the winding up of the comparison, Homer plainly by the vulture denotes Ulysses and his assistants (though perhaps not exclusively of the goddess) for in the application he writes:

Ὡς ἄρα τοὶ μνηστῆρας ἐπεσσύμενοι κατὰ δῶμα
 Τύπλον. — — —

On all sides thus they double wound on wound,
 In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground,
 Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan, 345
 And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Leiodes first before the victor falls :

The wretched augur thus for mercy calls.
 O gracious hear, nor let thy suppliant bleed :
 Still undishonour'd or by word or deed 350
 Thy house, for me, remains ; by me repress'd
 Full oft' was check'd th' injustice of the rest :
 Averse they heard me when I counsell'd well,
 Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.
 Oh spare an augur's consecrated head, 355
 Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead.

Priest as thou art ! for that detested band
 Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land :
 Against Ulysses have thy vows been made ;
 For them, thy daily orisons were paid : 360
 Yet more, ev'n to our bed thy pride aspires :
 One common crime one common fate requires.

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took
 Which Agelaüs' dying hand forsook ;
 Full thro' his neck the weighty falchion sped : 365
 Along the pavement roll'd the mutt'ring head.

v. 347. *Leiodes first before the victor falls :*

The wretched augur — — —]

This Leiodes is the last person who survives of the suitors ; he was an augur and a prophet, and ought therefore to have followed wiser counsels : he tells Ulysses that he endeavoured to restrain the suitors from their insolence ; but he himself aspired to the bed of Penelope, and consequently was an associate in their conspiracies. Leiodes falls without resistance ; and indeed it would have been very improper to have represented him encountering Ulysses in a single combat, when above an hundred had not been able to stand before him : besides, fighting is out of the character of Leiodes ; he was not a man of the sword, but an augur : it would therefore have been contrary to his function, to have drawn him engaging Ulysses ; and consequently it is with great propriety that he is described falling not as a warrior, but as a suppliant.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd,
 Phemius the sweet, the heav'n instructed bard.
 Beside the gate the rev'rend minstrel stands ;
 The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands ; 370
 Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
 To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,

v. 371. *Dubious — — — if to fly
 To Jove's inviolable altar nigh, &c.]*

This altar of Jupiter Hercæus stood in the palace-yard ; so called from ἔρκος, "the out-wall inclosing the court-yard." It stood in the open air, where they sacrificed to Jupiter the guardian, or protector ; and within the palace to Ζεὺς ἐπιῤῥχός.

Jupiter was worshipped under the same name by the Romans. Thus Ovid,

"Cui nihil Hercæi profuit ara Jovis."

The altar mentioned by Virgil, *Æneid.* ii. was of the same nature : to which Priam fled at the taking of Troy.

Uncover'd but by heav'n, there stood in view
 An altar ; near the hearth a laurel grew,
 Dodder'd with age ; whose boughs encompass round
 The household gods, and shade the holy ground.

These altars were places of sanctuary, and by flying to them the person was thought to be under the immediate protection of the deity, and therefore in some cases inviolable. The same practice prevailed amongst the Jews, for we find frequently in the scriptures that it was customary to fly to the altar as to a place of refuge, which is evident from the expression of laying hold on the horns of the altar. This is the reason why Phemius entertains an intention to fly to the altar of Jupiter Hercæus. Plutarch, in his treatise upon Music, informs us, that Demodocus was reported to have wrote a poem, intitled, "The destruction of Troy ;" and Phemius another, called, "The return of the Grecian captains ;" but by these poets Homer probably means only himself, who was author of two poems, the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*. Homer (remarks Eustathius) plainly shews us the notion he had of the great qualifications that were necessary to form a good poet. He must sing of men and gods ; that is, be thoroughly acquainted with all things both human and divine ; he must be αὐτοδίδακτος, or "self-taught ;" that is, as we express it, he must be a genius ; he must have a natural ability, which is indeed to be improved, but not capable of being learned, by study : he adds, that besides this felicity of nature, he must have an heavenly inspiration ; this implies that he must have a kind of enthusiasm, an elevation of soul which is not

Where oft' Laertes holy vows had paid,
 And oft' Ulysses smoking victims laid.
 His honour'd harp with care he first set down, 375
 Between the laver and the silver throne ;
 Then prostrate stretch'd before the dreadful man,
 Persuasive, thus, with accent soft began.

O king ! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
 And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind. 380
 A deed like this thy future fame would wrong,
 For dear to gods and men is sacred song.

to be obtained by labour and industry, and consequently is the gift of heaven. Thus Pindar,

————— σοφὰς ὁ πυχλ-
 λά εἰδὼς φυᾶ.
 Μαθόντες δὲ, λάβροι
 Παύλασσι, κόρακες ὦς,
 "Ακραῖα γάρυετον.

The bards, whom true poetic flame inspires,
 Receive from nature more than human fires ;
 In vain from arts alone they tune the voice,
 Like crows they croak, nor is it song, but noise.

This is the *Mens Divinior* of Horace : by industry men may become great scholars and philosophers ; but no man was ever a great poet, without being in the strictest sense a great genius. I will only add, that Aristotle in his *Rhet.* i. 7. quotes this hemistich *αὐτοδίδακτος*, &c. as an instance that natural are more excellent than acquired abilities ; he gives the reason of it ; namely, because they are more uncommon, and not to be obtained by human industry. Maximus Tyrius has a criticism upon it. How (objects that author) can it be said that the poet is self-taught, if the gods teach him to sing ? The answer is easy, Homer means that he has no human instructor, and only opposes natural to acquired abilities. It is observable that Maximus Tyrius erroneously quotes the verse, *Dissert.* xxii. for he writes, *Θεοὶ δὲ μοὶ ὅπασαν ὁμφὴν*, instead of

————— Θεὸς δὲ μοὶ ἐν φρεσὶν οἶμας
 Παντοίας ἀνέφυσεν —————

He likewise puts the words in the mouth of Demodocus, which are here spoken by Phemius ; he undoubtedly quoted by memory.

What Homer adds after all this, to raise the character of his poet, is very remarkably moral. That he never turned his talents to flattery, nor was it voluntarily that he served or entertained unworthy men, but was merely compelled to it by their violence.

Self-taught I sing ; by heav'n, and heav'n alone,
 The genuine seeds of poesy are sown ;
 And (what the gods bestow) the lofty lay, 385
 To gods alone, and god-like worth, we pay.
 Save then the poet, and thyself reward ;
 'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.
 That here I sung, was force and not desire ;
 This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire: 390
 And let thy son attest, nor fordid pay,
 Nor servile flatt'ry, stain'd the moral lay.

The moving words Telemachus attends,
 His fire approaches, and the bard defends.
 Oh mix not, father, with those impious dead 395
 The man divine ; forbear that sacred head ;
 Medon the herald too our arms may spare,
 Medon, who made my infancy his care ;
 If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
 Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live. 400

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
 Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
 Wrapt in a new slain ox's ample hide :
 Swift at the word he cast his skreen aside,
 Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears, 405
 And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears !

O prince ! O friend ! lo here thy Medon stands ;
 Ah stop the hero's unresisted hands,
 Incens'd too justly by that impious brood,
 Whose guilty glories now are set in blood. 410

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye :
 Be bold, on friendship and my son rely ;
 Live, an example for the world to read,
 How much more safe the good than evil deed :

v. 413. *Live, an example for the world to read,
 How much more safe the good than evil deed.]*

The moral intended to be taught by the fable of the Odysses is, to shew virtue, though long in distress, at length triumphant ; and

Thou, with the heav'n-taught bard, in peace resort 415
 From blood and carnage to yon' open court :
 Me other work requires—With tim'rous awe
 From the dire scene th' exempted two withdraw,
 Scarce sure of life, look round, and trembling move
 To the bright altars of protector Jove. 420

Meanwhile Ulysses search'd the dome, to find
 If yet there live of all th' offending kind.

Not one ! compleat the bloody tale he found,
 All steep'd in blood, all gasping on the ground.

So, when by hollow shores the fisher train 425 }
 Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main, }
 And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught contain, }

vice, though long successful, unfortunate in the conclusion : it is to this effect that Ulysses here speaks ; and to give his words more weight, he throws them into a sentence. It is with excellent judgment that it is here placed by Homer : the punishment is no sooner over but Ulysses declares the equity of it ; he speaks to all mankind, and lays it down as an universal truth, that virtue is to be preferred before vice, and invites us to the practice of the former, by shewing the success of it in his own victory ; and deters us from the latter, by representing the ill consequences of it in the destruction of the suitors.

v. 425. *So, when by hollow shores the fisher train
 Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main.]*

The antients, remarks Eustathius, observe that this is the only place where Homer manifestly speaks of catching fish with nets : for those words, lib. v. v. 595. of the Iliad,

————— and sweep away

Sons, fires, and wives, an undistinguish'd prey ;

which in the Greek is expressed by ἀψῖσι λίνα ἀλόνη πανάγρυ, may be applied to the taking of beasts or birds by nets, and consequently ought not to be appropriated to fishing. Thus it is evident that this art was practised very antiently amongst the Grecians ; it was likewise known early to the Hebrews and Ægyptians. Thus Isaiah xix. 8. “ The fishers (of Ægypt) shall mourn, all they that cast
 “ the angle into the brook shall lament, and they that spread nets
 “ upon the waters shall languish.” And that they fished the seas with nets is evident from Ezekiel xxvi. 5. “ It shall be a place
 “ for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea.” The comparison is very just ; and the last line of it gives a peculiar honour and distinction to Ulysses : that hero is the sun who kills the suitors, in application of the similitude.

All naked of their element, and bare,
The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air;
Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiff'ning prey 430
'Till the warm sun exhales their soul away.

And now the king commands his son to call
Old Euryclea, to the deathful hall:
The son observant not a moment stays;
The aged governess with speed obeys: 435
The sounding portals instant they display;
The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood.
So the grim lion from the slaughter comes, 440
Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams,
His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed compleat; 445
A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd:
The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said.

Woman, experienc'd as thou art, controul
Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
T' insult the dead is cruel and unjust; 450
Fate, and their crime, have sunk them to the dust.

v. 440. *So the grim lion, &c*] Eustathius agrees with an observation which has been made concerning the similitudes of the *Odyssey*, lib. xvi. He here remarks that comparisons are as rare in the *Odyssey* as they are frequent in the *Iliad*; and that the difference arises from the difference of the subjects: the subject of the *Iliad* is great, and therefore properly illustrated by noble images, and a variety of sublime comparisons: the subject of the *Odyssey* requires to be related in a less exalted style, and with greater simplicity. This book is an undeniable testimony of the truth of this observation: the story of it approaches nearer to the nature of the *Iliad* than any other book of the *Odyssey*, and we find it is more adorned with comparisons than almost all the rest of the poem.

v. 450. *T' insult the dead is cruel and unjust.*] The word in the original is *ὀλόλυξα*, and here signifies a voice of joy. In other places it is used to denote a sorrowful lamentation. See note on

Nor heeded these the censure of mankind,
The good and bad were equal in their mind.
Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
And each now wails an unlamented shade.

455

But thou sincere ! Oh Euryclea, say,
What maids dishonour us, and what obey ?

Then she. In these thy kingly walls remain
(My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
Taught by my care to cull the fleece, or weave, 460
And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive ;

v. 573. of the third *Odyssey*. I am wonderfully pleased with the noble sentiment of Ulysses contained in these lines. It is full of piety and humanity : good nature feels for the sufferings of any of its fellow-creatures. Even in punishment we are to remember, that those we punish are men, and inflict it as a necessary justice, not as a triumph. Such here is the conduct of Ulysses ; he is so far from rejoicing in his success, that he restrains others from it ; and seems to be a mourner at the funeral of his enemies. He falls into the same thought with Job xxxi. 29. “ If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him : if I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul,” &c.

Were a prince, who makes war for glory, to stand upon a field of battle immediately after victory, amidst the horrors of the dead, and the groans of the dying ; it would surely mortify his ambition to see such horrible monuments of his glory. If the death of thousands of brave men were weighed in a scale against a name, a popular empty breath of a multitude, and if reason held the balance, how easily would the disproportion be discovered ?

v. 453. *The good and bad were equal in their mind.*] There is some obscurity in these words, “ they neither respected the good nor the bad man ;” or as Homer expresses it,

Οὐ κακὸν ἔδδ' ἐμὲν ἐσθλόν.

A reverence is due to a good man, and consequently it is a crime to deny it ; but why should it be objected to the suitors as a fault that they despised the bad man, whose actions deserved to be despised ? Eustathius answers, κακὸς may signify ταπεινός, or a person of a low condition, the poor man, or the stranger ; and this justifies the assertion : but perhaps the poet uses it to shew that they despised and outraged all men universally without distinction, whether persons of probity or dishonesty ; they considered not the condition of others, but were insolent to all mankind.

Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
 Nor me nor chaste Penelope obey;
 Nor fits it that Telemachus command
 (Young as he is) his mother's female band. 465
 Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
 Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye;
 There wake her with the news—The matron cry'd;
 Not so (Ulysses more sedate reply'd)

v. 462. *Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way.*] It is remarkable, observes Monsieur Bayle, that of fifty women, so few as twelve only should yield to the desires of the suitors. But it is not indeed affirmed that the rest were ever tempted by any importunities. Plutarch, in his treatise of Education, informs us, that Bion wittily applied this passage to the study of the sciences: when the suitors failed in their attempts upon Penelope, they condescended to address her maids: so men who are not capable of understanding philosophy, busy themselves with studies of no value.

v. 464. *Nor fits it that Telemachus command
 (Young as he is) his mother's female band.*]

This, remarks Eustathius, is an instance of the maternal wisdom of Penelope; and at the same time a vindication of Telemachus for not restraining the insolence and immodesty of these female servants; they were out of his jurisdiction, and immediately under the protection of Penelope. But is not this removal of the fault from Telemachus, an imputation upon the queen? and if the son wanted an excuse for not punishing their crimes, is the mother unblameable, who not only permits the disorder of their lives, but forbids Telemachus to redress it? Is it to be supposed that this chaste matron was more indulgent to female frailty than Telemachus? The true reason is, Telemachus could not, and Penelope durst not, shew a just resentment against these criminals: they had too great an interest in the chief of the suitors to stand in awe of the queen, or fear her vengeance. This is evident, for Penelope herself was in a great measure in their power, and the same authority that supported the suitors in their insolence against the queen, would support these females against her revenge for their immodesty.

v. 469. *Not so (Ulysses more sedate reply'd).*] Ulysses gives this injunction, because he is unwilling to wound the eyes of Penelope with a spectacle of such horror as the dead bodies and blood of the suitors. It was indeed necessary to find some reasonable pretext for not introducing the queen immediately; this might be expected from the fondness and affection of an husband towards a beloved wife, and therefore Ulysses makes even his fondness for her a reason why he delays his discovery, namely, his care not to grieve her

Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty deeds ; 470
In haste the matron parts : the king proceeds.

Now to dispose the dead, the care remains
To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains ;
Th' offending females to that task we doom,
To wash, to scent, and purify the room. 475
These (ev'ry table cleans'd, and ev'ry throne,
And all the melancholy labour done)
Drive to yon' court, without the palace-wall,
There the revenging sword shall smite them all ;

with such a terrible scene of slaughter : besides, the death of the female servants is to succeed, and it would have been indecent to have made her assisting or present at their execution. The poet reaps a further advantage from this conduct ; for by it he introduces the discovery to Penelope, in a time of leisure, and finds an opportunity to describe at large that surprising and tender incident.

v. 477. ——— — *the melancholy labour done*
Drive to yon' court — ————]

It would in these ages, observes Dacier, be thought barbarous in a king to command his son to perform an execution of so much horror : but antiently it was thought no dishonour : thus in the scriptures, Gideon having taken Zeba and Salmana, two Midian kings, commands his son to kill them with the sword in his presence : but, continues that author, I wish Homer had deviated from this custom, that he had given both Ulysses and Telemachus sentiments of more humanity, and spared his reader a description of such a terrible execution. I am not delighted with any thing that has a tendency to inhumanity more than that lady ; but it may be answered, that Homer was obliged to write according to the custom of the age. Virgil has ascribed an act more cruel to the pious Æneas, who sacrifices several unfortunate young men who were his captives. *Æn. xi. v. 15.*

Then, pinion'd with their hands behind appear
Th' unhappy captives marching in the rear ;
Appointed off'rings in the victor's name,
To sprinkle with their blood the funeral flame. Dryden.

This act is to be ascribed to the manner of the age, and the customs of war in the days of Æneas, and not to his inhumanity : but here it may seem essential to the very nature of epic poetry to relate this act of justice : the moral of it is, to see the good rewarded and the wicked punished, in the conclusion of the fable. These criminals had been as guilty in their several capacities as the suitors themselves ; it was therefore necessary that their punishment should be set before the reader, as well as that of the suitors.

So with the suitors let them mix in dust, 480
Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.

He said : the lamentable train appear,
Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear ;
Each heav'd her mournful burthen, and beneath
The porch, depos'd the ghastly heaps of death. 485
The chief severe, compelling each to move,
Urg'd the dire task imperious from above.

With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er,
(The swains unite their toil) the walls, the floor }
Wash'd with th' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore. 490 }
Once more the palace set in fair array,
To the base court the females take their way ;
There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
(Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their fall.

Then thus the prince. To these shall we afford 495
A fate so pure, as by the martial sword ?
To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
And base revilers of our house and name ?

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
A ship's tough cable, from a column hung ; 500
Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
Whence no contending foot could reach the ground.
Their heads above connected in a row,
They beat the air with quiv'ring feet below :
Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare, 505
The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.

v. 505. *Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare.* Nothing can better represent to us the image of these sufferers than this similitude of a bird taken by the neck in a gin or snare. Hobbs, in his version, has omitted it ; and Dacier has abridged the whole description.

Eustathius is pleasant upon the death of these wantons. What a certain person, says he, once spoke of a fig-tree, on which his clamorous wife had hanged herself, viz. " I wish all trees bore such fruit," may be applied to these ropes, " It were to be wished that all nooses could catch such birds." This remark.

Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
The empty corse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
Their bloody work : they lopp'd away the man, 510
Morsel for dogs ! then trimm'd with brazen sheers
The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears ;
His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel :
He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell—

They wash, and to Ulysses take their way, 515
So ends the bloody business of the day.

To Euryclea then address the king :
Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
To purge the palace : then the queen attend,
And let her with her matron-train descend ; 520
The matron-train with all the virgin band
Asssemble here, to learn their lord's command.

Then Euryclea ; Joyful I obey,
But cast those mean dishonest rags away ;
Permit me first thy royal robes to bring : 525
Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king.
“ Bring sulphur straight and fire” (the monarch cries)
She hears, and at the word obedient flies.

has escaped the notice of Madam Dacier ; because the race of clamorous women has been long extinct, and therefore there was no occasion to prescribe a remedy for a disease unknown to these happy ages.

v. 527. *Bring sulphur straight and fire — — —*] The reason why Ulysses orders sulphur to be brought, is, because every thing was thought to be polluted by a dead body, and he uses it by way of purification. The same opinion prevailed amongst the Hebrews as well as Greeks, as the scriptures inform us. Thus also in Job it is said, “ Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation,” xviii. 15. which is thought to allude to this custom. Livy mentions this practice amongst the Romans, lib. xxx. c. 15. “ Habet & in religionibus locum ad expiandas suffitu domus.”

Homer describes the female servants descending with torches ; this is done to shew the exact time of the action of this book, which is comprehended in the evening of the fortieth day.

Ulysses forbids Euryclea to bring a better garment : this little particularity is inserted with judgment ; for the disguise of Ulysses

With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,
He purg'd the walls and blood-polluted rooms. 530
Again the matron springs with eager pace,
And spreads her lord's return from place to place.
They hear, rush forth, and instant round him stand,
A gazing throng, a torch in ev'ry hand.
They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace 535
Each humbly kiss'd his knee, or hand, or face ;
He knows them all ; in all such truth appears,
Ev'n he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

ses in the garb of a beggar contributes to increase the incredulity of Penelope, and consequently to all those doubts and fears, and that struggle between the love of a husband and the dread of an impostor, which are the subject of the succeeding book.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

* B O O K XXIII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Euryclea awakens Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her, but supposes some god has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has past during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,
The nurse with eager rapture speeds her way;
The transports of her faithful heart supply
A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.

* This book contains the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope. Monsieur Rapin is very severe upon some parts of it; whose objections I shall here recite.

The discovery of Ulysses to his queen was the most favourable occasion imaginable for the poet to give us some of the nicest touches of his art; but as he has managed it, it has nothing but faint and weak surprises, cold and languishing astonishments, and very little of that delicacy and exquisiteness which ought to express a conjugal tenderness: he leaves his wife too long in doubt and distrust, and she is too cautious and circumspect; the formalities she observes in being fully assured, and her care to act with security, are set down in number and measure, lest she should fall into any mistake; and this particularity makes the story dull, in a

And sleeps my child? the rev'rend matron cries: 5
Ulysses lives! arise, my child, arise!

place that so much requires briskness and liveliness. Ought not the secret instinct of her love to have inspired her with other sentiments? and should not her heart have told her, what her eyes could not? Love is penetrating, and whispers more to us than the senses can convey; but Homer understood not this philosophy: Virgil, who makes Dido foresee that Æneas designs to leave her, would have made better advantage of this favourable opportunity.

The strength of this objection consists chiefly in the long incredulity of Penelope, and the slowness she uses to make an undeniable discovery: this Rapin judges to be contrary to the passion of love, and consequently that the poet writes unnaturally.

There is somewhat of the Frenchman in this criticism: Homer, in his opinion, wants vivacity; and if Rapin had been to have drawn Ulysses, we had seen him all transport and ecstasy. But where there is most fancy, there is often the least judgment. Penelope thought Ulysses to be dead; he had been absent twenty years; and through absence and his present disguise, he was another person from that Ulysses whom she knew, when he sailed to Troy; so that he was become an absolute stranger. From this observation we may appeal to the reader's judgment, if Penelope, without full conviction, ought to be persuaded that this person was the real Ulysses? And how could she be convinced, but by asking many questions, and descending to particularities, which must necessarily occasion delay in the discovery? If indeed Ulysses and Penelope had met after a shorter absence, when one view would have assured her that he was her real husband, then too much transport could not have been expressed by the poet: but this is not the case, she is first to know her husband, before she could or ought to express her fondness for his return, otherwise she might be in danger of misplacing it upon an impostor: but she is no sooner convinced that Ulysses is actually returned, but she receives him with as much fondness as can be expressed, or as Rapin could require.

While yet he speaks, her pow'rs of life decay,
She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away:
At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,
And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew.

Till this moment the discovery was not evidently made, and her passion would have been unseasonable; but this is no sooner done, but she falls into an agony of affection. If she had here appeared cool and indifferent, there had been weight in Rapin's objections. Besides, Aristotle informs us, there was a play, called *The false Ulysses*: it was formed upon a story of a person who designed to surprise Penelope, and told her, that he was her husband; and to confirm it, pretended to remember a bow, which he used before he

At length appears the long-expected hour!

Ulysses comes! the suitors are no more!

went to the siege of Troy. This shews that Penelope had been in danger from impostors, and it is therefore very prudent in her to be upon the guard, and not to yield without full conviction.

But there is a dispute of a different nature mentioned by Monsieur Bayle; namely, whether if Penelope had yielded to an impostor, believing him to be really Ulysses, she had been guilty of adultery? Monsieur Basnage thus argues: "Let us suppose a wife transported
" with love for an husband, running eagerly to the person she
" mistakes for him: this woman has no design to be deceived,
" one cannot blame her ardour; it is lawful, if he proves her
" real husband: in short, her ignorance is involuntary, and oc-
" casioned solely by a laudable passion for her husband: yet if this
" person prove an adulterer, is the wife entirely inexcusable?
" ought her eagerness and precipitation to give her no uneasiness?
" Undoubtedly it ought, because she is supposed to act precipi-
" tately, without a full examination: her passion is stronger than
" her reason, and therefore she is blameable." The author of the General Critique on Maimbourg is more indulgent: he judges that if a woman does not refuse a strict examination out of a blameable motive, she is excusable, though she happens to oblige an impostor. "If a wife, deceived by the resemblance between her
" husband and an impostor, shall allow the latter all the privileges
" of the marriage-bed, this action is no stain to her chastity; and
" the husband would be the most unreasonable creature breathing,
" should he blame it as a breach of conjugal fidelity, provided she
" is no way accessory to the imposition." So that according to this author, though the wife is betrayed by her precipitation, yet she is to be accounted innocent; because the precipitation is occasioned by a vehemence of love for her husband. But I fear few husbands who should take their wives in such circumstances would excuse them, or believe that they had used due circumspection. In short, Monsieur Bayle rightly decides the question, by saying, that every person who acts precipitately is culpable; and that no person can act rationally, without a full and satisfactory examination. And indeed if this rule were observed, there would scarce be any room for the aforesaid supposition. The resemblance between man and man is never so perfect, but the difference, upon a strict observation, is discernible; we may therefore conclude, that a wife who should suffer such a deceit, was not very unwilling to be deceived; especially when there must be between a man and a wife a thousand particularities, which could only be known to the wife and husband, which upon a due scrutiny would discover the imposture.

I fear I shall be tedious to the reader, by mentioning another difficulty of a similar nature: started by Seneca. "If any person

No more they view the golden light of day ;
 Arise, and blest thee with the glad survey ! 10

Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen rejoin'd,
 Ah ! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind ?
 The righteous pow'rs who tread the starry skies,
 The weak enlighten, and confound the wise,
 And human thought with unresisted sway, 15
 Depress or raise, enlarge or take away :
 Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
 And folly with the tongue of wisdom speaks.
 Unkind, the fond illusion to impose !
 Was it to flatter or deride my woes ? 20

“ should make an assignation with his own wife in disguise, sup-
 posing her to be the wife of another person, would he be guilty
 of adultery ?” He answers in the affirmative ; though the wife
 herself would be innocent ; for he is guilty intentionally. This
 may be illustrated by the example of Jacob, who was blameless
 when he was deceived by Leah, who personated his wife Rachel ;
 but Leah was culpable, though Jacob was innocent, for she very
 well knew that she was not wife to Jacob. But this is the pro-
 vince of a casuist, not of a commentator.

v. 6. *Ulysses lives ! ——— Ulysses comes !*] In the Greek it is
 literally, Ulysses is come, he is at length come to his palace.
 This last circumstance is not a tautology ; for, observes Eustathius,
 a person may be returned to his country, and yet never arrive at
 his family : thus Agamemnon reached his dominions in safety,
 but was assassinated before he came to his palace. We may ob-
 serve in general, that Euryclea and Penelope, through their
 whole conference, speak with brevity ; Homer was too good a
 judge of human nature, to represent them speaking with prolixity.
 Passion is always in haste, and delivers itself with precipitation ;
 and this is very well painted in this interview : Euryclea is in a
 transport of joy for the return of Ulysses, and Penelope has all her
 affections awakened at the news of it.

v. 13. *The righteous pow'rs who tread the starry skies,
 The weak enlighten, and confound the wise.*]

This is an admirable sentiment : it is consonant to many expres-
 sions in the holy scriptures. God is the lord of spirits, and gives
 and takes away as seems best to his infinite wisdom. The thoughts
 of man, as well as his life, are equally in the power of the Al-
 mighty.

Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,
 Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy,
 Why must I wake to grieve; and curse thy shore,
 O Troy?—may never tongue pronounce thee more!
 Be gone: another might have felt our rage, 25
 But age is sacred, and we spare thy age.

To whom with warmth: My soul a lie disdains;
 Ulysses lives, thy own Ulysses reigns:
 That stranger, patient of the suitors wrongs,
 And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues, 30
 He, he is thine! thy son, his latent guest
 Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast;
 With well-concerted art to end his woes,
 And burst at once in vengeance on the foes.

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung
 Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung; 36

v. 21. *Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy, &c.*] Homer, observes Eustathius, very judiciously mentions this profound sleep of Penelope; for it might have been thought improbable, that she should not wake at the noise and confusion of the battle. It was solely to reconcile it to credibility, that in a preceding book Pallas was introduced to throw her into it: besides, the women's apartment was always in the upper part of the house, and was from thence called *ὑπερῶν*: and consequently Penelope was at a sufficient distance from the place of the combat, and may be easily supposed not to be waked by it.

The circumstance of Penelope's not being awaked by the cries of the suitors, furnishes us with a reason why they are not heard by the Ithacans that lived near the palace: for if she who is within the palace is not disturbed by the noise, it is credible enough, that the Greeks who lived at some distance from the palace should not hear it.

v. 35. ——— *the queen in transport sprung*
Swift from the couch ———]

We are not to gather from this transport of Penelope, that she is fully convinced of the return of Ulysses: she is yet incredulous; but she must have been insensible if she had continued unmoved at the mention of the arrival of an husband, whose return has been described through the whole *Odyssey* as the chief object of all her desires. Besides, she receives the death of the suitors with joy; she cannot disbelieve the testimony of Euryclea concerning

Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear,
 Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here?
 How could that num'rous and outrageous band
 By one be slain, tho' by an hero's hand? 40
 I saw it not, she cries, but heard alone,
 When death was busy, a loud dying groan,
 The damsel-train turn'd pale at ev'ry wound,
 Immur'd we sat, and catch'd each passing sound;
 When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends, 45
 And at his nod the damsel-train descends;
 There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,
 And the dead suitors almost swam in blood;
 Thy heart had leap'd the hero to survey,
 Stern as the furly lion o'er his prey, 50
 Glorious in gore!—Now with sulphureous fires
 The dome he purges, now the flame aspires;

their deaths; but thinking it impossible that they should be slain by any one person, she ascribes their destruction not to Ulysses, but a deity. But then is not such a supposition extravagant? and can it be reconciled to probability, that a god should really be supposed to descend to work their destruction? It may be answered, that the excess of the assertion ought to be ascribed to the excess of joy in the speaker: Penelope is in a transport, and no wonder if she speaks with amplification: she judges it impossible that such a great event should be wrought by a mortal hand; and it is therefore very natural, while she is under a surprise, and her thoughts raised above the bounds of calm reason, to ascribe it to a deity.

It has been believed that all the notions of good and bad dæmons that prevailed among the antients were borrowed from truth, and that they received them by tradition from the offices of good and bad angels: if I might be allowed to make this supposition, then what Penelope here speaks may be reconciled to strict verity; then we may find a reason why she may without extravagance ascribe the suitors deaths to a dæmon, or deity. Thus, 2 Kings xix. 35. "That night the angel of the Lord went out and smote
 "in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five
 "thousand." If this supposition be thought disallowable, the former will be a sufficient vindication. I will only add, that the poet artfully turns the incredulity of Penelope to the praise of Ulysses; the exploit was so great, that no mortal was brave enough to perform it; it must therefore be wrought by a god; but this god is at length discovered to be Ulysses.

Heap'd lie the dead without the palace-walls,—
 Haste, daughter haste, thy own Ulysses calls!
 Thy ev'ry wish the bounteous gods bestow, 55
 Enjoy the present good, and former woe;
 Ulysses lives his vanquish'd foes to see;
 He lives to thy Telemachus and thee!

Ah no! with sighs Penelope rejoin'd,
 Excess of joy disturbs thy wand'ring mind; 60
 How blest this happy hour, should he appear,
 Dear to us all, to me supremely dear!
 Ah no! some god the suitors deaths decreed,
 Some god descends, and by his hand they bleed;
 Blind! to condemn the stranger's righteous cause, 65
 And violate all hospitable laws!
 The good they hated, and the pow'rs defy'd;
 But heav'n is just, and by a god they dy'd.
 For never must Ulysses view this shore;
 Never! the lov'd Ulysses is no more! 70

What words (the matron cries) have reach'd my ears?
 Doubt we his presence, when he now appears?
 Then hear conviction: ere the fatal day
 That forc'd Ulysses o'er the wat'ry way,
 A boar fierce rushing in the silvan war 75
 Plough'd half his thigh; I saw, I saw the scar,
 And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound;
 But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
 Then daughter haste away! and if a lie
 Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die! 80

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies,
 Wise is thy soul, but errors seize the wife;
 The works of gods what mortal can survey?
 Who knows their motives, who shall trace their way!

v. 83. *The works of gods what mortal can survey?*] This assertion is made with great judgment. Euryclea had given almost a demonstrative proof that she was not mistaken in the person of Ulysses: she had instanced in the scar which he received by a

But learn we instant how the suitors trod 85
The paths of death, by man or by a god.

Thus speaks the queen, and no reply attends,
But with alternate joy and fear descends;
At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove!
Or rushing to his arms, confess her love! 90

boar on mount Parnassus; and this seemed to be an undeniable evidence of her veracity: what method then could the poet take to carry on Penelope's incredulity, and give her room to resist such evidence with any appearance of reason? This is very well explained by Eustathius. Penelope (observes that author) answers with profound wisdom; her words are short, but contain excellent truth and morality: this is her meaning: "Euryclea, you appeal to your senses for the truth of your affirmation; you saw the wound, and touched it as you bathed him; and he forbade you to make a discovery of his person: from hence you conclude, that it is Ulysses who has slain the suitors; not remembering that the gods are able thus to shew themselves to man, and assume at their pleasure such disguises: how then do you know but this is a god? Are you able to know the ways of a deity?" To this Euryclea makes no reply; from whence we may gather, that it was believed to be an undeniable truth, that the divine beings sometimes assumed the shape of man, and appeared visibly upon earth. Such expressions as these might almost persuade us of the reality of a former conjecture, that these notions were borrowed from a tradition of the appearances of angels; they being so consonant to the testimony of the holy scriptures, and so agreeable to the manifestations of those celestial beings.

v. 89. *At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove!
Or rushing to his arms, confess her love!]*

Penelope apprehends that the person mentioned by Euryclea is not Ulysses; yet her apprehensions are not so strong as to exclude all hopes that he is her husband; in this state of uncertainty she descends, doubtful whether to meet him as such, or first to prove him whether he be the real Ulysses; and this explains her conduct in this place: if he evidently were Ulysses, she ought to receive him with transport; but if he be not Ulysses, then all such advances would be acts of immodesty, and a reproach to her prudence. Ladies are best judges of what is decent amongst ladies, and Madam Dacier affirms, that the point of decency is well maintained by Homer through this whole interview; and that antiquity can shew nothing wherein a severity of manners is better observed. And indeed it must be allowed, that in this respect Penelope proceeds with no more than a necessary caution; it would have been very absurd to have described her flying to the embraces

Then gliding thro' the marble valves, in state
 Oppos'd, before the shining fire she sat.
 The monarch, by a column high entron'd,
 His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;
 Curious to hear his queen the silence break:
 Amaz'd she sat, and impotent to speak;

95

of a stranger, merely upon the testimony of Euryclea, without waiting for a personal and ocular demonstration.

v. 93. *The monarch, by a column high entron'd.*] The circumstance of persons of figure being placed by a column occurs frequently in the *Odyssey*; it may therefore be necessary to explain it: it is mentioned twice in the eighth book, *πρὸς κίονα μακρὸν ἐρείσας*, but being there applied to Demodocus who was blind, it may be thought to mean only that he leaned against the pillar by reason of his blindness; but this is not the full import of the words, they denote dignity; and a seat erected near the column was a seat of distinction. Thus 2 Kings xi. 14. "Behold the king stood by a pillar," *ἐπὶ τῷ στήλει*, "as the manner was, and the princes, &c., by the king." Thus we see the royal station was by some remarkable pillar; Josephus expresses it by *ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς*, which probably is a corruption; it ought to be *ἐπὶ τῆς στήλης*, "juxta columnam:" thus again, 2 Kings xxiii. 3. "And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant," &c. So that by this expression of Ulysses being seated by a column, we are to understand that he received Penelope as a king; he took the royal seat, to convince her that he was the real Ulysses.

v. 94. ——— *withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;
 Curious to hear his queen the silence break.*]

We have all along been vindicating the conduct of Penelope, for not immediately acknowledging Ulysses. Her ignorance of his person is her vindication; but how then is Ulysses to be justified, who is in no doubt about Penelope? Why does he not fly with transport to the wife of his affection? The reason is very evident: he very well knows that Penelope is uncertain about his person; he therefore forbears to offer violence to her modesty by any caresses, while she is in this state of uncertainty, and which decency requires her to refuse, till she is assured that the person who offers them is Ulysses.

Homer tells us, that Ulysses turned his eyes toward the ground. Eustathius imagines, that he does it that Penelope may not immediately discover him; but perhaps the poet intended no more than to draw Ulysses here, as he drew him in the *Iliad*, lib. iii. and describe him according to his usual behaviour.

————— In thought profound,
 His modest eyes he fix'd upon the ground.

O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
 Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.
 At length Telemachus—Oh who can find
 A woman like Penelope unkind? 100

Why thus in silence? why with winning charms
 Thus flow, to fly with rapture to his arms?
 Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
 When twice ten years are past of mighty woes:
 To softness lost, to spousal love unknown, 105
 The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone!

O my Telemachus! the queen rejoin'd,
 Distracting fears confound my lab'ring mind;

Thus also he is represented by Ovid. *Metam. lib. xiii.*

“*Astitit atque oculos paulum tellure moratos*

“*Sustulit*” ———

Then from his seat arose Laertes' son,

Look'd down awhile, and paus'd ere he begun. Dryden.

v. 96. *Amaz'd she sat, and impotent to speak.*] The reader will certainly be curious to know how Penelope accosts Ulysses in this first interview, and the poet manages it with excellent judgment: she must be supposed to be under a great surprise and confusion of thought; this surprise takes away her speech; she is torn between hopes and fears, and consequently it is very natural, before she speaks, to examine him with her eyes.

v. 106. *The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone.*] It has been objected that Telemachus here makes too free a remonstrance to Penelope; and that he is wanting in reverence towards his mother. Eustathius answers, that he speaks no more than Ulysses says himself, in the process of the story, and consequently he is no more blameable. But the case is not the same, there is a difference between a son and a husband, and what is decent in the mouth of the latter would be irreverent in the former. Spondanus is of opinion, that he offends against decency, “*juveniliter nimis insultavit;*” and Ulysses seems to repress his ardour.

Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wise ———

No more ———

Dacier answers, that Telemachus being fully assured that it is the real Ulysses, seems shocked at the indifference of Penelope. And indeed the warmth of the expression is to be imputed to the emotion of the speaker; so that we are not to look upon it as an outrage of decency towards Penelope, but a warm expostulation occasioned by his zeal for Ulysses.

Pow'rless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
Nor dare to question: doubts on doubts arise. 110

Oh deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove!

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies,
Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wife;
Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring: 115

This garb of poverty belies the king;
No more.—This day our deepest care requires,
Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
If one man's blood, tho' mean, distain our hands,
The homicide retreats to foreign lands; 120

v. 116. *This garb of poverty belies the king.*] This expression furnishes another cause for the incredulity of Penelope; Ulysses imputes it to his disguise, and is far from resenting it as a want of conjugal affection. I must confess, that here may seem to be an unseasonable transition: Homer brings Ulysses and Penelope together, raises our expectations to see a warm and tender description at the discovery of the husband to the wife, and all of a sudden he starts from the subject, and leaves us under an uncertainty equal to that of Penelope. The scene closes too abruptly, and Homer acts like one who invites his guests to an entertainment, and when they were sat down with an eager appetite, takes away their dinner. But then it may be answered, that the occasion presses: Ulysses finds it necessary to provide for his own safety, before the people of Ithaca are informed of the slaughter of the suitors; this is the dictate of good sense; he first acts the wise man, by guarding against an imminent danger; and then shews the tender husband, by his affection to Penelope: and this is the reason why he adjourns the discovery. Besides, this interval, which is very short, gives time to Penelope to recollect her spirits from surprise, and makes her mistress of her own thoughts. In that view the reader is to look upon this break, like a pause between the acts in a tragedy, and as an artful interruption to introduce the unravelling more naturally, and with greater probability.

v. 119. *If one man's blood ———*] Ulysses here argues very conclusively: if the person who has shed one man's blood only, and that man of inferiour station; if he is yet obliged to fly into banishment, lest he should be slain by any of the dead persons relations or friends; what have they to fear, who have not only slain one man, but above an hundred, and these not plebeians, but princes? They must necessarily have many avengers, who will be ready to pursue our lives.

But it may be objected, that Ulysses is a king, and therefore above apprehensions of punishment. It is true Ulysses is a king,

By us, in heaps th' illustrious peerage falls,
Th' important deed our whole attention calls.

Be that thy care, Telemachus replies,
The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise ;
For wisdom all is thine ! lo I obey, 125
And dauntless follow where you lead the way ;
Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
Thy coward son degen'rate lag behind.

Then instant to the bath, (the monarch cries)
Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise, 130
Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay ;
While the sweet lyrist airs of rapture sings,
And forms the dance responsive to the strings.
That hence th' eluded passengers may say, 135
Lo ! the queen weds ! we hear the spousal lay !

yet subject to the laws : his government was not so despotic, as to have no reason to fear the resentments of the chief families of his subjects, whose heirs were slain by his hand. I cannot entirely agree with Dacier in this last sentiment : Ulysses had only done an act of justice upon these offenders, and had transgressed no law by it, and ought therefore to apprehend no vengeance from the law. I should rather ascribe the apprehensions of Ulysses, to a fear of a sudden assault from the friends of the suitors, before he could discover himself to be the real Ulysses. He is afraid of an assassination, not a legal punishment ; the rage of the people, not the justice of the law.

v. 122. *Th' important deed our whole attention calls*] Ulysses, to prove Telemachus, and to form a judgment of his wisdom, asks his advice upon the present emergence ; but the poet, in his answer observes a due decency : Telemachus pays a laudable deference to the superiour wisdom of Ulysses, and modestly submits to his judgment. What we are to gather from this conduct is, that no person should be so self-confiding in his own judgment, as to despise that of other men, though those men are inferiour in wisdom.

v. 135. *That hence th' eluded passengers may say,
Lo ! the queen weds ————*]

This is an instance of the art of Ulysses, essential to his character, and maintained through the whole Odyssey. Eustathius excellently explains the reason of this conduct : the suitors had been accustomed to retire from the palace, and sleep in other places by night : it

The suitors death unknown, 'till we remove
Far from the court, and act inspir'd by Jove.

Thus spoke the king : th' observant train obey,
At once they bathe, and dress in proud array : 140
The lyrist strikes the string ; gay youths advance,
And fair-zon'd damsels form the sprightly dance.
The voice, attun'd to instrumental sounds,
Ascends the roof ; the vaulted roof rebounds ;
Not unobserv'd : the Greeks eluded say 145
Lo ! the queen weds ! we hear the spousal lay !
Inconstant ! to admit the bridal hour.
Thus they—but nobly chaste she weds no more.

would therefore have alarmed the whole city, and made them apprehensive that some calamity had befallen them, if there had not appeared a seeming reason why they returned not to their several houses as usual ; Ulysses therefore invents this stratagem to deceive them into an opinion that they stayed to celebrate the queen's nuptials. But there appears to be a strong objection against this part of the relation : we have already seen the suitors slain, without being heard by the Ithacans of the city ; is it then probable that the sound of the music should be heard abroad, when the cries, shouts, and groans, during the fight, were not heard out of the palace ? Was the music louder than these united noises ? It is not easy to solve this difficulty, unless we are allowed to imagine that the more than usual stay of the suitors in the palace had raised the curiosity of some of the Ithacans to inquire the reason of it ; who consequently approaching the palace might hear the music and dancing, and conclude that it was occasioned by the queen's marriage. Besides, in the stillness of the night, a lower sound may be further heard, than one more loud, during the noise and hurry of the day : it being evident from the preceding book, that the fight was by day.

v. 137. ——— 'till we remove
Far from the court ———]

It may be asked what occasions this recess of Ulysses ? Will he be better able to resist his enemies in the country than in the city ? The answer is, he withdraws that he may avoid the first resentments of the Ithacans, upon the discovery of the death of the suitors : besides, it is by this method in his power to conceal his person, till the violence of the people is settled ; or raise a party to resist their efforts ; at the worst, he is certain to secure his flight, if his affairs should be reduced to extremities.

Meanwhile the weary'd king the bath ascends ;
 With faithful cares Eurynomè attends, 150
 O'er ev'ry limb a show'r of fragrance sheds :
 Then drest in pomp, magnificent he treads.
 The warriour-goddes gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
 Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly 155
 His thick large locks, of hyacinthine dye.
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
 His heav'nly skill, a breathing image lives ;
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mould,
 And the pale silver glows with fusil gold : 160
 So Pallas his heroic form improves
 With bloom divine, and like a god he moves ;
 More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
 Radiant before his gazing consort sat.
 And oh my queen ! he cries ; what pow'r above 165
 Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love !
 Canst thou, Penelope, when heav'n restores
 Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
 Canst thou, oh cruel ! unconcern'd survey
 Thy lost Ulysses, on this signal day ? 170
 Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
 For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed :

v. 171. ——— *dispatchful spread*
For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed.]

These words have give occasion of censure from Monsieur de la Mothe de Vayer : according to whom the precaution of Penelope is not much to be admired ; “ Ulysses made himself suspicious by
 “ expressing so much eagerness to go to bed with Penelope ; she
 “ was so far from having time enough to know him, that she had
 “ scarce spoke three words to him, but he bluntly commands Eu-
 “ ryclea to get the bed ready for them.” So that, according to this author, Penelope mistrusts his impatience ; she imagines the reason why he is so hasty, is because he fears that a longer time would discover his imposture, and frustrate his desires. And indeed if Ulysses had given such a command, the objection had not been without a foundation. But La Mothe is deceived : Ulysses does not ask a bed for himself and Penelope, but for himself alone, be-

My weary nature craves the balm of rest :
But heav'n with adamant has arm'd her breast.

Ah no ! she cries, a tender heart I bear, 175

A foe to pride ; no adamant is there ;

And now, ev'n now it melts ! for sure I see

Once more Ulysses my belov'd in thee !

Fix'd in my soul as when he sail'd to Troy,

His image dwells : then haste the bed of joy ! 180

Haste, from the bridal bow'r the bed translate,

Fram'd by his hand, and be it drest in state !

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious, with disguise ;

Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies,

cause his wife vouchsafed not to come near him, and used him with a seeming cruelty.

Ἄλλ' ἄγε μοι, μαῖα, σόρεσον λέχῳ ὅφρα καὶ αὐτὸς
Δέξομαι —————

which is literally enough rendered in the translation,

Haste Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed.

v. 175. *Ah no ! she cries, a tender heart I bear,
A foe to pride ; no adamant is there.]*

It is not easy to translate this passage literally.

————— ἔτ' ἄρτι μεγαλίζομαι, ἔδ' ἀθεξίζω,
Οὐδὲ λῆν ἄγαμαι.

Eustathius explains *μεγαλίζομαι* to signify, “ I am not of a proud heart ;” *ἀθεξίζω*, “ I despise not your poverty ;” *ἄγαμαι*, “ I am no longer under an astonishment ;” or *ἔδ' ἀθεξίζω*, “ I cease to be surprised at what I see and hear.” Thus Penelope speaks negatively, and the meaning of her words are, that she is not influenced by pride and cruelty, to persist in her incredulity, but by a laudable care and caution. Eustathius proposes Penelope as a pattern to all women upon the like occasion ; her own eyes persuade her that the person with whom she confers is Ulysses ; Euryclea acknowledges her master ; Telemachus his father ; yet she dares not immediately credit her own eyes, Euryclea, or Telemachus : and the same author concludes with a pretty observation, that Ulysses found it easier to subdue above an hundred enemies, than the diffidence and incredulity of Penelope.

v. 183. *Thus speaks the queen, still dubious —————]* It must be allowed that this is a very artful turn of thought in Penelope.

Alas for this ! what mortal strength can move 185
Th' enormous burthen, who but heav'n above ?

Ulysses commands a bed to be prepared, Penelope catches the word, and seeming to consent, orders Euryclea to carry the bed out of the bridal apartment, and prepare it. Now this bed was of such a nature as to be inwrought into the substance of the apartment itself, and could not be removed : if therefore Ulysses had acquiesced in the injunction given by Penelope, and not discovered the impossibility of it, she might very justly have concluded him an impostor, being manifestly ignorant of the secret of his own marriage bed.

But Eustathius starts an objection against this whole process of the discovery, which he calls insolvable ; and indeed if Homer fails in the unravelling of his poem, he is to be severely blamed : Tully is of this opinion. "*Illic enim debet toto animo a poetâ in dissolutionem nodi agi ; eaque præcipua fabulæ pars est, quæ requirit diligentiam.*" The difficulty raised by Eustathius is as follows : Penelope imagines that the person who pretends to be her husband, is not really Ulysses, but a god, who not only assumes his form, but, to favour the imposture, the resemblance of the wound received from the boar : now if he be a god, how is it possible she should conceive him to be ignorant of the secret of the marriage bed, and consequently how can she be convinced of the reality of Ulysses from his knowledge of it, when it must necessarily be known to a god, as well as to the real Ulysses ? All that she ought to gather from it is, that the person with whom she speaks is Ulysses, or a god. Eustathius replies, that Penelope, upon the discovery of the secret makes no scruple to yield ; because whether it be Ulysses, or a god, her case is happy ; if he prove to be Ulysses, she has her wishes ; if a god, it is no small piece of good fortune. Dacier condemns this solution, and tells us, that Penelope was so faithful to her husband, that she would not have received even a god in the place of Ulysses : the true answer (continues that author) is to be drawn from the pagan theology, according to which the inferiour deities were supposed to have a finite knowledge, and consequently Penelope might think the discovery of the nuptial bed a full conviction of the reality of Ulysses, it being so great a secret that even a god might be ignorant of it. But this is all fancy ; for allowing this person to be a god, why might not Penelope imagine him to be a deity of the superiour order, and for that reason well acquainted with the secrets of this nuptial bower ? especially because Jupiter himself was notorious for such amorous illusions. Dacier herself confesses this to be no just solution, but gives a very different reason : how is it possible (says she) that this bed and whole apartment should be built by the single hand of Ulysses, without being seen by any person while he builds it ? or how can any one be assured that a secret that is known to a third person (Actoris) is not through weakness or interest discovered to others ? It is true the manner of the discovery entirely depends upon the

It mocks the weak attempts of human hands ;
But the whole earth must move, if heav'n commands.

choice of the poet ; but I could wish that he had chosen a method more probable than this of the nuptial bed, which in my judgment (continues the same author) is unworthy of the *Odyssey*. I am persuaded that this is one of the places where (as *Horace* writes) *Homer* nods.

I will lay together what occurs to me by way of reply. The first objection is, that *Penelope* imagines *Ulysses* to be a god, and consequently his knowledge of the nuptial bed ought not to have induced her to believe him to be the real *Ulysses*. The answer is, *Penelope* thought him a god only during her first transport ; it is to be imputed to her surprise, that she at all thinks him a deity. This is very evident, for from the moment she saw him, the thought of his divinity vanishes, and she never mentions one word concerning such a supposition, nay from the first glance she almost believes him to be the real *Ulysses*.

O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.

She is so far from thinking him a deity, that she is almost persuaded that he is her husband. If this be allowed, the first difficulty ceases : for granting her belief that the person before her is a real man, and no man but *Ulysses* was acquainted with the nuptial bed ; it follows, that this man is the real *Ulysses*, and that this incident is not ill chosen by the poet, in the discovery of *Ulysses*.

Dacier objects, that this apartment could not possibly be erected without being known to other persons ; but we have seen *Ulysses* build a ship in a solitary island, without the assistance of any man, in the fifth *Odyssey* ; and why may he not then be allowed to do the same, with respect to this nuptial bower ? All kinds of arts in mechanics were antiently practised by the greatest personages, and their knowledge and dexterity in them was esteemed a glory. This consideration may perhaps reconcile the reader to this part of the discovery.

The only difficulty that now remains is this : *Actoris*, a female servant, is allowed to be in the secret ; how then can *Penelope* be assured that she has not betrayed it ? *Homer* himself obviates this objection ; he has in a very solemn manner told us, that only twelve of all the female train were guilty of a breach of trust, and therefore *Penelope* may safely rely upon the fidelity of *Actoris*. Besides, it adds no small weight to this vindication of *Homer*, to observe, that the whole procedure of the discovery is accidental ; how could *Ulysses* foreknow that the proof of his veracity would depend upon his knowledge of the bridal bower ; and consequently it is not to be imagined that he should have made any clandestine enquiries

Then hear sure evidence, while we display
 Words seal'd with sacred truth, and truth obey : 190
 This hand the wonder fram'd ; an olive spread
 Full in the court its ever verdant head.
 Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high
 The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky ;

about it : it may be added, that Ulysses has been no more than five days upon the Ithacan shores, and probably had never seen Actoris, who alone was acquainted with the nature of this bed : no person was antiently permitted to enter the women's apartment, but fathers, husbands, or brothers ; this therefore was the greatest secret in all families ; this secret Penelope proposes in the trial of Ulysses, and upon his knowledge of it receives him as her husband. To instance almost in a parallel case ; Orestes in Euripides tells Iphigenia, that the lance which Pelops used in the combat against Ænomaus was lodged in her apartment ; this circumstance convinces her that the person who knew this secret must be her brother Orestes, no persons of a more distant relation being admitted into such privacies.

v. 193. *Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high
 The huge trunk rose ———]*

I will not promise that the reader will be pleased with this description of the nuptial bower : the Greek is noble, and the words sounding and harmonious ; an happiness that is wanting in our language. In this and the like cases the translator must say with Lucretius upon a like occasion,

“ ——— Graiorum obscura reperta
 “ Difficile illustrare Latinis versibus esse,
 “ Propter Egestatem linguæ, & rerum novitatem.”

Besides, it must be allowed that the relation itself is very wonderful ; for it is not easy to conceive that the bole of an olive tree should be so large as to contain upon the dimensions of it a whole bedstead. I would willingly imagine that it is only a supporter of it. It is likewise somewhat extraordinary that this olive tree is not felled, or cut up from the roots ; for Eustathius informs us, that *αποτάμνω* signifies “ to cut asunder at some distance from the “ earth ;” so that a great part of the trunk is left standing, upon which Ulysses builds his bridal bed. What occurs to me upon this incident is, that Homer must be imagined to write according to the customs of the age in which he lived, unless we can suppose he unnecessarily invented an absurdity : I therefore doubt not but there were antiently such beds as this of Ulysses. Besides, the more wonderful this bed is, the better it serves for the purpose of Homer, in convincing us that the person, who was acquainted with

Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bow'r 195
 And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r ;

The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins ;
 And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.

I lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain
 Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain ; 200

Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,
 And bore it, regular, from space to space :

Athwart the frame, at equal distance lie

Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye ;

Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mould 205

With silver shone, with elephant, and gold,

But if o'erturn'd by rude, ungovern'd hands,

Or still inviolate the olive stands,

'Tis thine, oh queen, to say : and now impart,

If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart ? 210

While yet he speaks, her pow'rs of life decay,

She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away :

At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,

And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew :

The tears pour'd down amain : and oh, she cries, 215

Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise !

O vers'd in every turn of human art,

Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart !

The righteous pow'rs that mortal lots dispose,

Decree us to sustain a length of woes, 220

a matter so uncommon, must be the real Ulysses, and not an impostor : it is for this purpose that the poet describes the bower built round the olive tree, before the framing of the bed is at all mentioned.

Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bow'r,
 And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r ;
 Then lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain
 Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain.

This, I say, is particularly described by Homer, to convince us that the place where the bed stood was entirely secret ; it being closed up from observation before this particular apartment was undertaken, and therefore the knowledge of it was a strong argument that the person who was acquainted with it must be the real Ulysses.

And from the flow'r of life, the bliss deny
 To bloom together, fade away, and die.
 O let me, let me not thine anger move,
 That I forbore, thus, thus, to speak my love ;
 Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms, 225
 Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms !
 I dreaded fraud ! Men, faithless men, betray
 Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey :
 Against the fondness of my heart I strove,
 'Twas caution, oh my lord ! not want of love : 230
 Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
 Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms ;

v. 231. *Like me had Helen fear'd* ———] This passage occasioned great disputes amongst the antient critics ; some contended for the common punctuation ; others thus read it,

Εἰ ᾔδῃ, ———

Then the meaning of the passage is thus to be understood. Helen would not have yielded to a stranger, if she had known that stranger, εἰ ᾔδῃ, ἀνδρᾶ is to be understood according to this interpretation. The same critics thus construe the following words,

Ὅ μιν αὐτίς ἀρήϊοι νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.

“Ὅ is the same with δι’ ὅ, “ propter hanc causam,” and the whole passage is thus to be translated, “ If Helen had known the stranger, “ she would not have yielded to him ; therefore the Greeks rose in “ arms to free her from the impostor.” They defend this application by having recourse to a tradition, that Paris could never have obtained the consent of Helen if Venus had not given him the resemblance of Menelaus, in whose form he prevailed upon that fatal beauty : otherwise the instance is no way parallel ; for if Helen was not deceived, how can her example be brought to induce Penelope to act with caution, lest she take an impostor to her bed instead of an husband ? I confess this construction of the Greek appears to me very obscure ; contrary to the style of Homer, which is always clear and natural. Besides, it contradicts the whole story of Helen through the Iliad and Odyssey, and she herself no where alledges this deceit as her excuse, but frequently condemns her own conduct in forsaking the bed of Menelaus. But granting that she was thus deceived originally, the deceit must necessarily soon appear, and yet she voluntarily cohabits many years with Paris. The other interpretation may therefore perhaps be preferable ; namely, if Helen had considered what evils might ensue from her injury to Menelaus, she would have acted more wisely : this Penelope in-

Ere Greece rose dreadful in th' avenging day ;
 Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.
 But heav'n, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed 235
 That she should wander, and that Greece should bleed :
 Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
 She colour'd all our wretched lives with woe.
 But why these sorrows when my lord arrives ?
 I yield, I yield ! my own Ulysses lives ! 240
 The secrets of the bridal bed are known
 To thee, to me, to Actoris alone,
 (My father's present in the spousal hour,
 The sole attendant on our genial bow'r.)
 Since what no eye has seen thy tongue reveal'd, 245
 Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield.

Touch'd to the soul the king with rapture hears,
 Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.
 As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores
 Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars ; 250
 Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
 And gulf'd in crouds at once the sailors die ;
 If one more happy, while the tempest raves,
 Out-lives the tumult of conflicting waves,
 All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand, 255
 And plunging forth with transport grasps the land :
 The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
 Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.
 Nor had they ended 'till the morning ray :
 But Pallas backward held the rising day, 260

roduces to vindicate her conduct in acting with so much caution ; she opposes her wariness to the inconsiderateness of Helen, and ascribes all the calamities of Greece to it.

v. 260. *But Pallas backward held the rising day*] We are not to look upon this merely as a poetical ornament, there is no necessity for it. The battle between the suitors and Ulysses happened in the evening ; since then we have seen the palace purified, the dead suitors carried away, and the female servants punished ; Euryclea has held a long conference with Penelope, there has been singing and dancing in the palace, and an interview at large described be-

The wheels of night retarding, to detain
 The gay Aurora in the wavy main :
 Whose flaming steeds, emerging thro' the night,
 Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies : 265
 Yet fate, yet cruel fate repose denies ;
 A labour long, and hard, remains behind ;
 By heav'n above, by hell beneath enjoin'd :
 For, to Tiresias thro' th' eternal gates
 Of hell I trod, to learn my future fates. 270
 But end we here—the night demands repose,
 Be deck'd the couch ! and peace awhile, my woes !

To whom the queen. Thy word we shall obey,
 And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away ;
 Since the just gods, who tread the starry plains 275
 Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.
 But what those perils heav'n decrees, impart ;
 Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.

tween Ulysses and Penelope ; then the poet proceeds to recapitulate the story of the whole Odyssey : now all these incidents could not be comprehended in the compass of one night : Homer therefore, to reconcile it to probability, introduces Minerva to protract it, and make the time proportionable to the incidents. But perhaps it may be thought a violent machine, and contrary to the established laws of nature, to suppose the course of the night alterable : the answer is, poets are allowed to write according to common fame, and what Homer here relates could not shock the ears of the antients, who had before heard of the like story at the conception of Hercules. I will only observe, that Homer gives no more than two horses to Aurora's chariot, Lampus and Phaethon ; whereas the chariot of the sun is described with four : thus Ovid,

“ Interea volucres Pyroeis, Eous, & Æthon,
 “ Solis equi, quartusque Phlegon.”

v. 278. *Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.*] Ulysses had said in the sentence immediately preceding,

A labour long, and hard, remains.

This could not fail of alarming Penelope, and raising all her curiosity to know it. Homer would greatly have offended against nature, if he had not described her under an impatience upon the

To this the king. Ah why must I disclose 280
 A dreadful story of approaching woes ?
 Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
 When thou must learn what I must speak with tears ?
 Heav'n, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees
 Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas ;
 From realm to realm a nation to explore 285
 Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
 Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,
 A painted wonder, flying on the main ;
 An oar my hand must bear ; a shepherd eyes
 The unknown instrument with strange surprise, 290
 And calls a corn-van : this upon the plain
 I fix, and hail the monarch of the main ;
 Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
 Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar :
 Thence swift re-sailing to my native shores, 295
 Due victims slay to all th' ætherial pow'rs.
 Then heav'n decrees in peace to end my days,
 And steal myself from life by slow decays ;

mention of it ; her fondness is too sincere to be indifferent upon
 such a suggestion, but her answer to Ulysses chiefly demands ob-
 servation.

If heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows ;
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !

This discovers a greatness of spirit worthy of a queen and heroine :
 she is threatened to lose Ulysses by a second absence, she is alarmed
 with a new train of his sufferings ; but being informed that all these
 calamities will end in a prosperous issue, that long life and happi-
 ness attend him, she not only takes courage personally, but com-
 forts her husband. Homer was too good a judge of decency to
 ascribe the weakness that attends the generality of that sex to Pe-
 nelope ; she has a bravery of soul worthy of a heroine in epic poetry.
 Besides, this is a further instance of Homer's judgment ; the event
 of the *Odyssey* is to shew Ulysses happy ; now if the poet had not
 fully satisfied the reader in this respect, he had not reinstated his
 hero in prosperity, and consequently had defeated the moral of the
Odyssey, which is to shew wisdom and virtue triumphant, by re-
 presenting his hero after all difficulties settled in full tranquillity.

Unknown to pain in age resign my breath, 299
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death ;
 To the dark grave retiring as to rest ;
 My people blessing, by my people blest.

Such future scenes th' all-righteous pow'rs display,
 By their dread * feer, and such my future day.

To whom thus firm of soul : If ripe for death, 305
 And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath :
 While heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows ;
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !

But Euryclea with dispatchful care,
 And sage Eurynomè, the couch prepare : 310
 Instant they bid the blazing torch display
 Around the dome an artificial day ;
 Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
 And to the queen Eurynomè descends ;
 A torch she bears to light with guiding fires 315
 The royal pair ; she guides them, and retires.
 Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
 To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.

* Tiresias.

v. 317. ——— his fair spouse Ulysses led
 To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.]

The reader may be pleased to consult the annotations on book xi. v. 152, &c. concerning the answer of Ulysses to Penelope ; it being a repetition from that part of the Odyssey.

Eustathius informs us, that Aristarchus, and Aristophanes the grammarian, thought the verse quoted at the head of this remark, to be the conclusion of the Odyssey, and consequently they judged the remaining part of this book, and the whole xxivth, supposititious : those who were of a contrary opinion replied, that by ending the poem with that verse, many incidents of great importance would be rejected : for instance, the recapitulation of the whole Odyssey, and especially the discovery of Ulysses to his father Laertes, with all the beautiful fictions contained in it. They add, that if the little relation that the beginning of that book bears to the subject of the poem, be a reason for the rejection of it, we must for the same reason abridge the poem, and reject a multitude of the fables which are scattered through the whole course of it. It may therefore be conjectured that Aristarchus and Aristophanes were

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair; 320

not of opinion that the poem ended with this verse, but only the most necessary and important incidents. Casaubon, in a remark upon a passage of Strabo, favours the opinion of Aristarchus, for he there speaks of the last book as if he suspected it to be spurious; and Rapin joins in the same judgment. Homer is to be defended in another manner, than by such arguments as are brought in answer to Aristarchus. The same objection has been made against the two last books of the Iliad, as against these of the Odyssey; the former ought to have ended with the decisive action in the death of Hector, and the latter with the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope, when his happiness seems to be established. But there is no weight in these objections. There is a difference between the "unravelling" of the action, and the full "accomplishment of it;" the action is unravelled by the death of the suitors; but there are consequences arising from their deaths that hinder the accomplishment of the action, namely, the danger of the resentments of their friends, who rise in arms to revenge their slaughter; and till their insurrection is pacified, Ulysses cannot be said to be in a state of security. The subject of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles: that of the Odyssey, the re-establishment of Ulysses in his dominions: now the anger of Achilles ends not with the death of Hector, nor is Ulysses fully re-established by the death of the suitors; he has another obstacle to overcome, and till the commotions of the Ithacans are appeased, the design of the poem is not executed, which is to shew Ulysses in peaceful possession of his palace and authority. We see in this very book, that Ulysses is forced to fly from his own palace; can he then be said to be re-established in tranquillity? This very action demonstrates, that what follows is part of the subject of the poem, and such a part, as, if it had not been related, would have given us room to have imagined that Homer had never finished it, or that the conclusion of it had been lost. The beginning of the action is his sailing from Troy toward his country; the middle contains all the calamities he sustains in his return, the disorders of his family before and after it; and the end of the action is his re-establishment in the peaceful possession of his kingdoms, when he is acknowledged by his wife, father, family, and subjects: now this is not compleated till the very end of the last book, and consequently that book is not spurious, but essential. The poet had ended very injudiciously, if he had stopped before; for the reader would have remained unsatisfied in two necessary points, viz. how he was made known to Laertes, and what vengeance the chief families of the nation endeavoured to take against the destroyer of their sons; but this storm being once blown over, and all his subjects who had taken arms being either vanquished or appeased, the action is compleated in all its parts, and consummates the Odyssey.

But in discourse the king and comfort lay,
While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away;
Intent he hears Penelope disclose
A mournful story of domestic woes,

v. 324. *A mournful story of domestic woes.*] It is with great judgment that the poet passes thus briefly over the story of Penelope; he makes her impatience to hear the history of Ulysses the pretended occasion of her conciseness; the true reason is, he is unwilling to tire his reader by repeating what he already knows: it is likewise remarkable, that Ulysses does not begin his own adventures by a detail of his sufferings during the war of Troy; for this would have been foreign to the design of the *Odyssey*; but with his sailing from Troy to the Cicons, and enters directly into the subject of it. He likewise concludes an epitome of the whole *Odyssey* in the compass of one and thirty lines: and purposely contracts it, because we are already acquainted with the whole relation.

Lycophron has given us a summary of the wanderings of Ulysses; which if any one is desirous to compare with this of Homer, he will see the difference between a clear and an obscure writer. Tibullus, in his Panegyric on Messala, has been more successful than Lycophron, he follows the order of Homer, and treads directly in his footsteps.

“ Nam Ciconumque manus adversis repulit armis,
“ Non valuit Lotos captos avertere cursus;
“ Cessit & Etnææ Neptunius incola rupis,
“ Victa Maronæo fœdatus lumina Baccho,
“ Vexit & Æolios placidum per Nerea ventos;
“ Incultos adiit Læstrygonas,” &c.

Dacier is of opinion, that this recapitulation in Homer has a very good effect. I will translate her observation. We learn from it, that the subject of the *Odyssey* is not alone the return of Ulysses to his country, and his re-establishment in it; but that it comprehends all his wanderings and all his voyages; all that he saw, or suffered in his return to it; in a word, all that he underwent after he set sail from the shores of Troy: another advantage we reap from it is, that we see the order and train of the adventures of his hero, as they really happened, naturally and historically: for in his relation of them in his poem, he uses an artificial order; that is, he begins at the latter end, and finds an opportunity to insert all that precedes the opening of his poem by way of narration to the Phæacians: here he sets every event in its natural order, so that with a glance of the eye we may distinguish what gives continuity to the action, and what is comprehended in it. By this method we are able to separate the time of the duration of the poem, from the time of the duration of the action; for in reality the poem begins many years before the return of Ulysses; but Homer begins his action but thirty-five days before he lands in his own

αὐτῷ
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His servants insults, his invaded bed, 325
 How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,
 His generous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
 And the wild riots of the suitor-train.

The king alternate a dire tale relates,
 Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates; 330

All he unfolds : his list'ning spouse turns pale
 With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale ;
 Sleepless devours each word ; and hears, how slain
 Cicons on Cicons swell th' ensanguin'd plain ;
 How to the land of Lote unblest he fails ; 335

And images the rills, and flow'ry vales !
 How dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
 (Not unreveng'd) and quaff'd the spouting gore ;
 How the loud storms in prison bound, he fails
 From friendly Æolus with prosp'rous gales ; 340

Yet fate withstands ! a sudden tempest roars
 And whirls him groaning from his native shores :
 How on the barb'rous Læstrigonian coast,
 By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost ;
 How scarce himself surviv'd : he paints the bow'r, 345

The spells of Circe, and her magic pow'r ;
 His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
 To seek Tiresias in the vales of death ;
 How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
 His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade ; 350

And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts !
 Then how unharm'd he past the Siren-coasts,
 The jostling rocks where fierce Charybdis raves,
 And howling Scylla whirls her thund'rous waves,
 The cave of death ! How his companions slay. 355

The oxen sacred to the god of day,

country. In the course therefore of the *Odyssey*, Homer gave us the artificial, here the natural order ; which is an ease and assistance to the memory of the reader.

v. 355. ——— *How his companions slay
 The oxen sacred to the god of day.*]

'Till Jove in wrath the rattling tempest guides,
 And whelms th' offenders in the roaring tides :
 How struggling thro' the surge, he reach'd the shores
 Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bow'rs ; 360

The story of these oxen is fully related, lib. xii. I refer to the annotations. The crime of the companions of Ulysses was sacrilege, they having destroyed the herds sacred to a god. These herds were said to be immortal : I have there given the reason of it, but too concisely, and will therefore add a supplement from the *Polyhymnia* of Herodotus ; I ought to have mentioned, that the body of soldiers called immortal, was a select number of men in the army of Xerxes : so named, because upon the death of any one of their number, whether by war or sickness, another was immediately substituted into his room, so that they never amounted to more or less than ten thousand. If we apply this piece of history to the herds of Apollo, it excellently explains Homer's poetry : they are called immortal, because upon the death of any one of the whole herd, another was brought into its place ; they are said neither to increase nor decay, because they were always of a fixed number, and continually supplied upon any vacancy.

The reader will be apprized of the heinousness of the crime in killing these oxen, from an observation of Bochart, p. 314. The Phœnicians and Ægyptians so superstitiously abstained from the flesh of the ox, that, as Porphyry affirms, they would sooner feed upon human flesh than that of such beasts. Ælian tells us, that it was death amongst the Phrygians to kill a labouring ox ; and Varro, *Rust. lib. ii. c. 5.* thus writes ; “ *ab hoc antiqui manus ita abstinere voluerunt, ut capite sanxerint, si quis occidisset.*” Thus also Columella, in *Præfat. lib. vii.* “ *Cujus tanta fuit apud antiquos veneratio, ut tam capitale esset bovem necâsse, quam civem.*”

I have been the more full upon this head, to shew that Homer's fiction is built upon a foundation of truth, and that he writes according to the religion of the antients : Rapin is very severe upon him for ascribing the death of the companions of Ulysses, to the violation of these herds of Apollo. “ The reason (says he) why they are destroyed is very ridiculous, because, lib. i.

————— they dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the god of day.

“ This is certainly a far-fetch'd destruction : the hero or the poet was willing to be freed from them.” But from this observation, they will be found to be guilty of sacrilege, and a violation of what was regarded by the world with the utmost veneration ; and consequently the crime is adequate to the punishment. Be-

Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet reluctant amorous delay;
 And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow,
 Immortal life exempt from age and woe;
 How fav'd from storms Phæacia's coast he trod, 365
 By great Alcinous honour'd as a god,
 Who gave him last his country to behold,
 With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.
 He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
 A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares. 370

Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
 Minerva rushes thro' th' aerial way,
 And bids Aurora with her golden wheels
 Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills :
 Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed, 375
 And thus with thought mature the monarch said.

My queen, my consort ! thro' a length of years,
 We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears,
 Thou, for thy lord ; while me th' immortal pow'rs
 Detain'd reluctant from my native shores. 380

fides, Horace, Epist. lib. i. gives sentence against these companions of Ulysses.

————— “ Cærite cerâ
 “ Digni, remigium vitiosum Ithacensis Ulyssæi ;
 “ Cui potior patriâ fuit interdicta voluptas.”

v. 361. *Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay.*] This is a circumstance (observes Madam Dacier) that Ulysses ought by no means to forget ; for it gives him an opportunity to pay an high compliment to his wife, by letting her know he preferred her person to that of Calypso a goddess : this is the reason why he enlarges upon it in five verses ; whereas he concludes most of the other adventures in little more than one. But (adds that lady) we may easily believe that he was silent about the nature of his conversation with that nymph ; and indeed it would have lessened the compliment, and perhaps his welcome home, if he had not been able to keep a secret ; he is very cautious in this respect ; he enlarges upon the fondness of Calypso for his person, but suppresses, for a very obvious reason, the kind returns he made for her civilities,

Now, blest again by heav'n, the queen display,
 And rule our palace with an equal sway :
 Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
 To throng my empty folds, with gifts or spoils.
 But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes 385
 With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies ;
 The good old man to wasting woes a prey,
 Weeps a sad life in solitude away.
 But hear, tho' wife ! This morning shall unfold
 The deathful scene, on heroes, heroes roll'd ; 390
 Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
 From all the scene of tumult far away !

He spoke, and sheath'd in arms, incessant flies
 To wake his son ; and bid his friends arise.
 To arms ! aloud he cries : his friends obey, 395
 With glitt'ring arms their manly limbs array,
 And pass the city-gate ; Ulysses leads the way.
 Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
 The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

v. 398. ————— *Pallas shrouds*
The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.]

Ulysses, to avoid observation, leaves the city at the point of day, before the darkness was quite dispelled ; this is the suggestion of his own wisdom, which is figured by Minerva.

This book ends in the morning of the forty-first day. There are but few verses in the translation, more than in Homer : I speak it not as if this were a beauty, it may as well be a fault ; our heroic verse consists but of ten syllables, the Greek oftentimes of seventeen, as in this verse,

Αὐτίς ἔπειτα πῆδονδε κυλίνδετο λαῶας ἀναιδής.

We therefore write with the disadvantage of seven syllables, which makes it generally impossible to comprehend the sense of one line in Homer within the compass of one line in a translation, with any tolerable beauty ; but in some parts, where the subject seemed to hang heavy, this has been attempted ; with what success, must be left to the reader.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

* B O O K XXIV.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge, and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses, who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: and the goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects, which concludes the Odyssey.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign
Conveys the dead, a lamentable train!
The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,

* It has been already proved, that this book is the genuine work of Homer; but perhaps the reader may not be displeased to see the reasons why it was rejected by so great a critic as Aristarchus: I shall therefore lay them before him from Didymus and Spondanus.

Aristarchus affirms, that this is the only place in Homer where Mercury performs the office of conducting the souls of the dead; and that there is no proof he was known so early by the title of *Ψυχοπομπός*; that this is the only passage where he is called Cyllenius; that the ceremony of his guiding the souls is contrary to other descriptions of Homer, where they all descend without a guide into the mansions of the dead, even before the funeral rites. That it is absurd to imagine a "white rock" in these kingdoms of darkness, &c. To these Didymus thus replies. If a single

That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day ; 5
Points out the long, uncomfortable way.

mention of any incident in Homer were a reason for its rejection, abundance of passages must be rejected. He thinks it a sufficient argument, that Mercury was called *Ψυχόπομπός*, and Cyllenius, in the days of Homer, that he is here mentioned under these titles ; but this is begging the question. He adds, that although the souls of the dead descend without a guide in other places, this hinders not but they may descend with one ; for they are in other places only said in general to descend, whereas here the manner of their descent is particularized. Neither is it any objection against this book, to say that it is contrary to the manner of Homer to describe the shades of the dead received immediately into the state of Achilles, Agamemnon, &c. before the performance of their funeral ceremonies ; this (says he) is a favour granted by Mercury to Ulysses, who was descended from that deity, he being the father of Arcisius, and consequently great grandfather to Ulysses. It was the opinion of the ancients, that the shades of the deceased could visit the earth before the obsequies were finished, but not afterwards ; this is evident from the words of Patroclus, Iliad xxiii.

————— To the further shore,
When once we pass, the soul returns no more.

It is therefore out of favour to Ulysses, that Mercury introduces these shades into the region where Agamemnon resided, before the funeral ceremonies, that they might not return to earth and disquiet Ulysses. But there may be a stronger objection made against the former part of this book ; namely, that this is an episode which has no relation to the principal subject, and that we may retrench it without destroying any part of the action essential to the Odyssey : but it may be answered, that though it makes no part of the principal action, yet it has a sufficient connection with it : it is the sequel of the death of the suitors, and consequently the principal action is the cause of it ; it is drawn and deduced from it, and Homer makes a very happy use of it to adorn and diversify his poem, with the history of what happened before Troy, after the conclusion of the Iliad ; and in particular, with the death of Achilles, and a description of his funeral ceremonies. Didymus, Dacier.

Plato in the beginning of his third dialogue, de Repub. brings an heavy charge against Homer, for the disadvantageous character he gives of a future state. He quotes the similitude of the bats, and affirms that the dreadful description of the condition of the dead, must deter mankind from hazarding their lives, even in the cause of their country. “ Let us then (says that author) with the
“ permission of Homer and other poets, reject such relations, not
“ because they are unpoetical, not because they are unpleasant to
“ read, but because by how much they are more pleasant and

Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
 Thin, hollow screams, along the deep descent.
 As in the cavern of some rifted den,
 Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene; 10
 Cluster'd they hang, 'till at some sudden shock,
 They move, and murmurs run thro' all the rock:
 So cow'ring fled the fable heaps of ghosts,
 And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.
 And now they reach'd the Earth's remotest ends, 15
 And now the gates where ev'ning Sol descends,
 And Leucas' rock, and Ocean's utmost streams,
 And now pervade the dusky land of Dreams,

“ poetical, by so much they are more dangerous, and to be kept
 “ from our youth, and men, who are born to assert their liberty
 “ with the hazard of their lives, and prefer death to slavery.” It
 must be allowed that this is strong reasoning, and it is not easy
 to guard the doctrine of Homer from such unhappy consequences;
 for why should men chuse to die, rather than be slaves, when by
 death they fall into a worse condition? It will not be an answer
 to say that Homer asserts a threefold state in futurity, viz. of the
 soul, the εἶδωλον, or “ vehicle,” and the body: and that while
 the “ vehicle” is in this condition of horrors, the soul may be
 happy; for still the state of the dead is represented as a state of
 horror, and man is in part (namely, in his εἶδωλον) miserable
 after death: nay, so miserable that even Hercules, who was a
 god, and received amongst the deities, is yet tormented in hell;
 lib. xi.

Here hov'ring ghosts, like fowl, his shade surround,
 And clang their pinions with terrific sound,
 Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
 Th' aerial arrow from the twanging bow.

It will indeed be a vindication of Homer as a poet, to say that
 he wrote according to the opinion of his age; and that such as
 was the notion of the ancients of a future state, such is his de-
 scription of it. I will only add, that we may collect from Plato,
 that he judged this book genuine, for he quotes this passage as
 Homer's.

v. 17. *And Leucas' rock* ———] This description of the de-
 scent into hell is more particular than that in the eleventh Odyssey;
 and each particular is well suited to the subject; the descent is
 fabled to be by the ocean, because the sun seems to descend through
 it into night or the region of darkness, in the western parts of

And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell

In ever-flow'ring meads of Asphodel.

20

The empty forms of men inhabit there,

Impassive semblance, images of air!

Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before;

Ajax, and great Achilles are no more!

heaven. Milton fables the sun to rise through the gates of light, after the manner of the antients.

————— 'Till morn,
Wak'd by the circling hours, with rosy hand
Unbarr'd the gates of light—————

The circumstance likewise of going through the region of Dreams is well chosen; dreams are the attendants of sleep, the brother of death; they come by night, and are therefore well imagined to have relation to the kingdom of death, and to be introductory to it; Virgil, in the descent of Æneas into hell, has borrowed this image,

“ ————— Quam sedem somnia vulgo
“ Vana tenere ferunt”—————

The god of sleep there hides his heavy head,
And empty dreams on every leaf are spread.

The only circumstance liable to objection is, the Leucadian, or white rock, which Aristarchus thought improperly placed in the road to the realms of darkness; but (replies Eustathius) this is only meant of a rock standing on the extremities of the earth, or a rock on which the last rays of the sun fall. Dacier imagines, that there is a further meaning in the expression: “ There is an island
“ overagainst Arcarnania, on the west of Ithaca, called Leucas,
“ from a white rock standing in it; this rock was famous in an-
“ tiquity, because lovers in despair threw themselves from the
“ top of it into the ocean; it was called the Lover's Leap, and
“ being thus remarkable for the deaths of numbers of people,
“ Homer places it here.” This is no ill explication; for a rock may well be feigned to stand at the entrance of the region of death, by which so many persons had entered into it.

Ovid, in his Epistles, mentions this Leucadian rock.

————— O you that love in vain,
Fly hence, and seek the fair Leucadian main:
There stands a rock from whose impending steep,
Apollo's fane surveys the rolling deep;
There injur'd lovers, leaping from above,
Their flames extinguish, and forget to love.

Yet still a master-ghost, the rest he aw'd,
 The rest ador'd him, tow'ring as he trod;
 Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd,
 And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

25

New as they were to that infernal shore,
 The suitors stopp'd, and gaz'd the hero o'er,
 When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
 Of great Atrides: him in pomp pursu'd
 And solemn sadness thro' the gloom of hell,
 The train of those who by Ægysthus fell.

30

O mighty chief! (Pelides thus began)
 Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man!

35

v. 35. *O mighty chief! (Pelides thus began) &c.*] This appears to be introduced somewhat unnaturally: Achilles had now been dead about ten years, and Agamemnon almost as long; it can therefore scarce be reconciled to probability, to imagine that they should not have met before this time, and mutually have satisfied their curiosities, by relating their several stories at some former interview: Dacier indeed remarks, that we are not to imagine this conference was held at the time when the suitors descended, but upon some preceding occasion, immediately after the death of Agamemnon. If this be allowed, yet the objection remains, that the introduction is forced and unnatural, for then the descent of Mercury and the shades of the suitors will be no reason why this conference should be here repeated: for so, neither Mercury nor the suitors hear it. But Dacier is undoubtedly in an error; for *ἐὔρον* in the original is the third person plural, and absolutely refers to Mercury and the shades of the suitors; and therefore it follows that this conference happened at the time of their entrance.

The shades of the suitors (observes Dacier) when they are summoned by Mercury out of the palace of Ulysses, emit a feeble, plaintive, inarticulate sound, *τρίζουσι*, "strident:" whereas Agamemnon, and the shades that have long been in the state of the dead, speak articulately. I doubt not but Homer intended to shew by the former description, that when the soul is separated from the organs of the body, it ceases to act after the same manner, as while it was joined to it; but how the dead recover their voices afterwards is not easy to understand. In other respects Virgil paints after Homer.

" ——— pars tollere vocem

" Exiguam: inceptus clamor frustratur hiantes."

King of a hundred kings! to whom resign'd
 The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind.
 Com'st thou the first, to view this dreary state?
 And was the noblest the first mark of fate? 40

Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon,
 The lot, which all lament, and none can shun;
 Oh! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
 With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round!
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
 Historic marbles to record thy praise: 46

Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone
 Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son.
 But heavier fates were destin'd to attend:
 What man is happy, 'till he knows his end? 50

O son of Peleus! greater than mankind!
 (Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd)
 Thrice happy thou! to press the martial plain
 Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain:
 In clouds of smoke, rais'd by the noble fray, 55 }
 Great and terrific ev'n in death you lay, }
 And deluges of blood flow'd round you ev'ry way. }

They rais'd a feeble cry, with trembling notes,
 But the weak voice deceiv'd their gasping throats. Dryden.

But why should we suppose with Dacier, that these shades of the suitors have lost the faculty of speaking; I rather imagine, that the sounds they uttered were signs of complaint and discontent, and proceeded not from an inability to speak: after Patroclus was slain, he appears to Achilles, and speaks very articulately to him; yet to express his sorrow at his departure he acts like these suitors: for Achilles

Like a thin smoke beholds the spirit fly,
 And hears a feeble, lamentable cry.

Dacier conjectures, that the power of speech ceases in the dead, till they are admitted into a state of rest; but Patroclus is an instance to the contrary in the Iliad, and Elpenor in the Odyssey, for they both speak before their funeral rites are performed, and consequently before they enter into a state of repose amongst the shades of the happy.

v. 56. *Great and terrific ev'n in death* ———] There is a very peculiar beauty in the versification of Homer in this place:

Nor ceas'd the strife, 'till Jove himself oppos'd,
And all in tempests the dire ev'ning clos'd.

Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load,
And decent on the funeral bed bestow'd.

Then unguents sweet and tepid streams we shed;
Tears flow'd from ev'ry eye, and o'er the dead
Each clipt the curling honours of his head.

Struck at the news, thy azure mother came;

The sea-green sisters waited on the dame:

A voice of loud lament thro' all the main

Was heard, and terrour seiz'd the Grecian train:

————— σὺ δὲ σροφάλιγγι κονίης
Κεῖσο μέγας μεγαλωσὶ.

The words μέγας μεγαλωσὶ set the largeness of the body of Achilles stretched out upon the ground full before our eyes; we see him in the description; the repetition forces it upon our observation, so that the mind has time to dwell upon it, and admire the extent of the limbs of that hero.

v. 68. ————— *terrour seiz'd the Grecian train.*] This description furnished Aristarchus with another objection to this book: he thought it improbable that the appearance of Thetis and her sea-nymphs should terrify the whole Grecian army; they say in answer, that all the ocean was in a great commotion as Thetis ascended, or as Homer expresses it,

————— βοὴ δ' ἐπὶ πόντον ὀρώρει
Θεσπεσίη. —————

This uproar occasioned their fear; the Greeks were ignorant of the cause of it, and consequently apprehended some dreadful event; this is evident, for Nestor appeases their consternation by unfolding the reason of the tumult, and shewing them that it was occasioned by the ascent of Thetis.

The reader has undoubtedly observed how excellently Homer sustains his characters; Nestor is the wisest man, both in the Iliad and Odyssey: he has the experience of a very great age, and may therefore be supposed to be acquainted with all the most uncommon appearances in nature: the poet accordingly describes him as the only person not afraid in the Grecian army; there were others undoubtedly as brave as Nestor, but not one so wise; his intrepidity is therefore to be imputed to his wisdom, not bravery; and this furnishes us with an excellent moral; That ignorance is usually the source of fear.

Back to their ships the frightened host had fled;
But Nestor spoke, they listen'd, and obey'd. 70

(From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
And long vicissitudes of human things.)

“ Forbear your flight: fair Thetis from the main

“ To mourn Achilles leads her azure train.”

Around thee stand the daughters of the deep, 75

Robe thee in heav'nly vests, and round thee weep,

Round thee, the muses, with alternate strain,

In ever-consecrating verse, complain.

Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,

And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears. 80

The character of Achilles is no less happily supported; the same love of glory is visible in all he speaks, that distinguished his character through the Iliad: he still prefers a short life with fame, before old age without it.

ὦς ὄφελος τιμῆς ἀπονήμεν ἢς περ ἄνασσεσ,
Δήμῳ ἐνὶ Τρώων Δάναον καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν.

The sentiment is truly heroic; dishonour is worse than death, the happiness or misery of which is not to be measured by time, but glory; long life is but lengthened mortality, and they who live the longest have but the small privilege of creeping more leisurely than others to their graves.

v. 77. *Round thee, the muses* ————] It is impossible (observes Dacier) not to be struck with the noble fictions of Homer in honour of Achilles; every circumstance is great. A whole army is in tears; the muses celebrate his glory; a goddess and her nymphs ennoble it with their presence and lamentations. At the funerals of other heroes, women and captives are the mourners; here the muses personally appear. Heaven and earth, men and gods interest themselves in the obsequies of so great a hero! Yet from this place Aristarchus draws an argument for rejecting this book: Homer (says he) no where else gives the number of the nine muses, insinuating that their number was not fixed in his age; but Homer frequently invokes the muses, why then should he be ignorant of the number? and if not ignorant of it, why might he not mention it? Aristarchus further adds, that it is absurd to imagine the body of Achilles could be preserved seventeen days without burial; but this may be ascribed to the power of Thetis, who may easily be supposed to preserve it. Besides, why may not the body be embalmed? and then there will be no occasion for a miracle, and the interposition of a goddess: we must remember what she did to the body of Patroclus in the Iliad.

'Till sev'nteen nights and sev'nteen days return'd,
 All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.
 To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day,
 And fatted sheep and fable oxen flay;
 With oils and honey blaze th' augmented fires, 85
 And like a god adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.
 Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pile
 Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil;
 Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
 And the mix'd clamour thunders in the skies. 90
 Soon as absorpt in all-embracing flame
 Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,
 We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
 With wines and unguents in a golden vase,
 (The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old, 95
 And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold)
 There we thy relics, great Achilles! blend
 With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend:

v. 97. *There we thy relics, great Achilles! blend
 With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend.]*

This is agreeable to the request made to Achilles by the ghost of Patroclus, in the Iliad.

Hear then! and as in fate and love we join,
 Ah suffer that my bones may rest with thine!
 That golden urn thy goddess's mother gave,
 May mix our ashes in one common grave!

It is likewise asserted by Homer, that the bones of Antilochus were repositied in the same urn with those of Patroclus and Achilles; where then is the peculiar honour paid to Patroclus, if Antilochus was partaker of it? The difference is, the bones of Achilles and Patroclus were mixed in the urn, those of Antilochus lay separately.

Homer adds, that the whole army raised a monument to Achilles; this is done according to his own injunctions in the Iliad, for speaking of the tomb of Patroclus, he thus proceeds;

Meantime erect the tomb with pious hands,
 A common structure on the humble sands;
 Hereafter Greece, some nobler work may raise,
 And late posterity record our praise.

In the same urn a sep'rate space contains
Thy next belov'd, Antilochus' remains. 100

Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround
Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound :
High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
That wide th' extended Hellespont surveys ;
Where all, from age to age who pass the coast, 105
May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.

Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
Heroic prizes and exequial games ;
The gods assented ; and around thee lay
Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day. 110

Oft' have I seen with solemn funeral games
Heroes and kings committed to the flames ;
But strength of youth, or valour of the brave
With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
Such were the games by azure Thetis giv'n, 115
And such thy honours, oh belov'd of heav'n !
Dear to mankind thy fame survives, nor fades
Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.

But what to me avail my honours gone,
Successful toils, and battles bravely won ; 120
Doom'd by stern Jove, at home to end my life,
By curst Ægythus, and a faithless wife !

Thus they ; while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.

On each majestic form they cast a view, 125
And tim'rous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
But Agamemnon, thro' the gloomy shade,
His antient host Amphimedon survey'd ;

Achilles means, that when he is dead the Greeks should raise one common monument to himself and Patroclus, which we see here effected.

v. 127. *But Agamemnon, thro' the gloomy shade,
His antient host Amphimedon survey'd.*]

An objection has been raised against this passage, and it has been thought an absurdity that Agamemnon should be the guest of Am-

Son of Melanthius ! (he began) O say !
 What cause compell'd so many, and so gay, 130 }
 To tread the downward, melancholy way ?
 Say, could one city yield a troop so fair ?
 Were all these partners of one native air ?
 Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
 Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep ? 135
 Did nightly thieves, or pirates cruel bands,
 Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's sands ?
 Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,
 Say, for the public did ye greatly fall ?
 Inform thy guest ; for such I was of yore 140
 When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore ;
 Forc'd a long month the wint'ry seas to bear,
 To move the great Ulysses to the war.

phimedon, and not of Ulysses, when he came to make an address to him, and was within his territories. Didymus answers, that this conduct in Agamemnon was occasioned by the refusal of Ulysses to assist in the war of Troy : Agamemnon repented his denial, and went to the house of Amphimedon.

v. 142. *Forc'd a long month ———
 To move the great Ulysses to the war.]*

It is not obvious why Ulysses, who was a person of the greatest bravery, should be unwilling to engage in such an action of glory, as the war of Troy : was it because he foresaw that it would be a work of danger, (as Eustathius imagines) or was he dissatisfied in the ground of it, which was only to revenge the rape of Helen, and nothing but a private injury ? The former is a reason unworthy of his heroic character, the latter is no more than a conjecture. It may possibly be a truer reason that he was unwilling to forsake his wife, of whom he was very fond, and whom he newly had married ; but then it must be allowed, that he prefers his love to his glory. Eustathius recites the manner how he was drawn to engage in the war of Troy : Ulysses, to deliver himself from the importunities of his friends to assist Agamemnon, pretended madness, and yoked two animals of a different kind to a plough, and began to work with them ; Palamedes, who suspected the imposture, took his son Telemachus, an infant, and laid him in the furrow before the plough ; Ulysses turned aside not to hurt his child, and this discovered the imposition. Aristotle takes notice of the great judgment of Homer in suppressing this incident concerning Ulysses, it being unworthy of the bravery of an hero : he is proving, chap. viii,

O king of men! I faithful shall relate
 (Reply'd Amphimedon) our hapless fate. 145
 Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
 With rival loves pursu'd his royal dame:
 Her coy reserve, and prudence mix'd with pride,
 Our common suit nor granted, nor deny'd;
 But close with inward hate our deaths design'd; 150
 Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.
 Her hand, laborious, in delusion, spread
 A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread;
 Ye peers (she cry'd) who press to gain my heart
 Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part, 155
 Yet a short space, your rival-suit suspend,
 'Till this funereal web my labours end:
 Cease, 'till to good Laertes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death:
 Lest, when the fates his royal ashes claim, 160
 The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;
 Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
 Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.

The fiction pleas'd: our gen'rous train complies,
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise. 165
 The work she ply'd; but studious of delay,
 Each following night revers'd the toils of day.

of his Poetics, that all the actions of an hero's life are not to be inserted in an epic poem, for the actions of the same man are so many and different, that we can never reduce them to unity: for this reason Homer mentions not all the adventures of Ulysses, but only such as have relation to the subject of the Odyssey; he knew that this counterfeit madness had no connection either in truth or probability with the subject of his poem, and therefore he forbears the mention of it. The reader will understand the meaning of Aristotle, if he considers that the subject of the Odyssey is the story of a person who suffers great calamities in the return to his country, before he establishes himself in his dominions: now the counterfeited madness of Ulysses has no connection with the sufferings, and consequently is judiciously omitted by Homer as foreign to the design of the poem, and contrary to the unity of the action. A detail of all the adventures of an hero's life is the province of history; the relation of one single, great, and surprising action, is the subject of epic poetry.

Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;
 The fourth, her maid reveal'd th' amazing tale,
 And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand, 170
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.

Forc'd, she compleats it; and before us lay
 The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
 Display'd the radiance of the night and day. }

Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil, 175
 Ill fortune led Ulysses to our isle.

Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
 At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay :
 Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
 And speedy lands, and secretly confers. 180

They plan our future ruin, and resort
 Confed'rate to the city and the court.

First came the son ; the father next succeeds,
 Clad like a beggar, whom Eumæus leads ;
 Propt on a staff, deform'd with age and care, 185
 And hung with rags, that flutter'd in the air.
 Who could Ulysses in that form behold ?

Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,
 Ill us'd by all ! to ev'ry wrong resign'd,
 Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind. 190

But when, arising in his wrath t'obey
 The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way ;
 The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
 Careful he treasur'd in a private room :

Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose 195
 The archer's strife : the source of future woes,

v. 195. *Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose, &c.*] We have already seen, that it was the contrivance of Penelope to propose the bow, to gain time to defer the marriage hour ; how then comes Amphimedon to ascribe it to the art of Ulysses ? Eustathius answers that Amphimedon is in an error, and that though the contrivance was from Penelope, yet Amphimedon could not come to the knowledge of it ; and such stratagems being agreeable to the character of Ulysses, he imputes this action to him rather than Penelope.

And omen of our death ! In vain we drew
 The twanging string, and try'd the stubborn yew :
 To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands ;
 In vain we threat ; Telemachus commands : 200

It is impossible not to take notice that Homer makes repetition after repetition : Agamemnon speaks the same words as in the eleventh *Odyssey* : Amphimedon the same as in the second ; and the whole account of the suitors destruction is no more than a recital of what the reader already knows. Was Homer tired at the end of his work, and would not give himself the labour of invention ? I confess we may lose our appetite to see the same entertainment thus continually served up in the very same manner, without so much as a new garnishment. I fear the words of Ulysses may sometimes be applicable to Homer.

And what so tedious as a twice-told tale ?

Besides, this whole infernal interview is merely ornamental, which the poet was at liberty to insert or omit according to his judgment, without breaking the thread of the principal action ; it might therefore be wished that he had substituted some other incident in the room of it, and given a greater diversity to the story. If by laying the scene in hell, he designed to raise the wonder and curiosity of the reader (who cannot fail of having his attention awakened to see a prospect opened beyond the bounds of nature, and to look into the state of departed heroes) yet it must be confessed that this design has already been fully executed in the eleventh of the *Odyssey*. But the poet seems to introduce the descent for the information of the dead rather than the living ; Agamemnon is told how the suitors were destroyed by Ulysses ; and Achilles how nobly the Greeks performed his funeral obsequies ; incidents that very little contribute to the story of the *Odyssey*. In short, the main action stands still during this whole episode, which takes up almost half the book, and the latter part of the episode presents no new object to amuse and entertain us. But,

————— “ Cynthus aurem
 “ Vellit” ————

I betray my own want of judgment, rather than discover Homer's errors. I will only add, that the reader will be fully convinced that this whole episode may be omitted, by observing how well the story will be carried on with a regular connection by beginning the book with these words,

Οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ ἐκ πόλιν κατέβαν, τάχα δ' ἄγρὸν ἵκοντο, &c.

So that if I could in any part subscribe to the opinion of Aristarchus for the rejection of this book, it should be only for the former part of it, but I am persuaded from the nobleness of the verses, that the whole is genuine.

The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent;
 Thro' ev'ry ring the victor arrow went.
 Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood;
 Pour'd forth the darts, that thirsted for our blood,
 And frown'd before us, dreadful as a god! 205
 First bleeds Antinous: thick the shafts resound;
 And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground;
 This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall;
 Some god assisted, and unmann'd us all:
 Ignoble cries precede the dying groans; 210
 And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.

Thus, great Atrides! thus Ulysses drove
 The shades thou seest, from yon' fair realms above.
 Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
 Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor. 215
 No friend to bathe our wounds! or tears to shed
 O'er the pale corse! the honours of the dead.

Oh blest Ulysses (thus the king express'd
 His sudden rapture) in thy consort blest!
 Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue, shin'd; 220
 Not more thy patience, than her constant mind.
 Icarius' daughter, glory of the past,
 And model to the future age, shall last:
 The gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
 (Their great reward) a poet in her praise. 225
 Not such, oh Tyndarus! thy daughter's deed,
 By whose dire hand her king and husband bled:
 Her shall the muse to infamy prolong,
 Example dread! and theme of tragic song!
 The gen'ral sex shall suffer in her shame, 230
 And ev'n the best that bears a woman's name.

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
 Conferr'd the mounful phantoms of the dead.

v. 232. *Thus in the regions of eternal shade.*] I think it will not be improper here to particularize from whence antiquity raised the

While from the town, Ulysses, and his band,
Past to Laertes' cultivated land.

fictions concerning hell, and the nature of it, as we have it in Diodorus Siculus.

Pluto (observes that author) was the first that introduced the rites of sepulture, and other ceremonies bestowed on the dead: this is the reason why the antients imagined him to be the king of the dead.

Rhadamanthus is said to have been the most just man in the world, he severely punished robbers and other notorious offenders, and from his singular reputation for integrity was feigned to be the judge of the good and bad after death; and for the same reason Minos was joined with him in the same dignity.

Homer borrowed his fictions from Orpheus, Orpheus from the Ægyptians: it was Orpheus who introduced the opinion of the pains of the damned, and of the Elysian fields, and taught that the souls of the dead were conducted by Mercury into the infernal mansions: (a proof that he was called *ψυχοπομπὴς* before the days of Homer.) Diodorus proceeds, and mentions in the beginning of this book, how Homer feigns that Mercury leads the shades of the dead by the ocean, the Leucadian rock, and the gates of the sun: a plain instance that he looked upon this book as the genuine work of Homer. All these fables (continues Diodorus) are of Ægyptian extract; by the ocean, Homer means Nilus; by the gates of the sun, he means Heliopolis, a city sacred to the sun; the meadow into which the shades are conducted, denotes the pleasant meadows full of canes, adjoining to Memphis; and the dead are feigned to reside there, because it was the general burial-place amongst the Ægyptians. Concerning Cocytus, Acheron, &c. the reader may consult the first note upon the eleventh Odyssey.

Plutarch, in his treatise of Isis and Osyris, agrees with Diodorus concerning the extraction of these fables from Ægypt, and mentions at Memphis the gates of lamentation and oblivion; that is, of Lethe, and Cocytus; which being opened at the burial of the dead, give a doleful and groaning sound. From hence they are thus described by Homer in the tenth Odyssey.

And where slow rolling from the Stygian bed
Cocytus' lamentable waters spread,
Where the dark rock o'er hangs th' infernal lake,
And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.

These observations give light to most of Homer's fictions concerning hell, and shew that his poetry is built upon the customs of antiquity.

Macrobius explains all these particulars after a different manner: this solution supposes a state of pre-existence of the soul: "If (says that author) to die, be the same as to go to the infernal regions; to enjoy the supernal, is then to live; and therefore before phi-

The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain,
And labour made the rugged soil a plain.

There stood his mansion of the rural sort,
With useful buildings round the lowly court :
Where the few servants that divide his care, 240
Took their laborious rest, and homely fare ;
And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
With constant duty tends his drooping age.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
And martial son, Ulysses gave command. 245

“ Iosophy prevailed, the body itself was supposed to be the infer-
“ nal receptacle of the soul, into which she descended as into a
“ prison, from above ; this was thought the sepulchre of the soul,
“ and the cave of Pluto. The river of oblivion denotes the error
“ of the soul, which forgets the majesty of the former state she en-
“ joyed before she entered the body : Phlegethon, the ardour of
“ our desires, and flames of anger ; Acheron, all our words and
“ actions that bring us into sorrows ; so likewise, Styx implies
“ our hatred, Cocytus our grief and lamentation. Thus also the
“ punishments in hell are verified upon earth : the vulture which
“ preys upon the liver of Tityus, is the sting of a guilty con-
“ science ; the ambitious man is the Sisyphus, who is eternally
“ aspiring, and yet always disappointed ; the avaritious man is the
“ Tantalus, who starves amidst his plenty,” &c.

By joining these two interpretations together, we have at once the double pleasure of a beautiful fable and instructive moral ; from the whole we may collect, that although the antients were ignorant of the true nature of a future state, yet that they believed it, and expected there would be punishments and rewards in it. This note is of use to explain several passages in the eleventh Odyssey.

v. 236. *The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain.*] Eustathius very well explains these words, in which the Greek may be construed to signify that Laertes had purchased this place of retirement by his labour and industry : but probably Homer intends to express an allotment or portion of ground which was assigned Laertes by the public, as a reward for his heroic labours in war, and bravery in conquering his enemies, like that mentioned in the Iliad.

The Lycians grant a chosen space of ground,
With woods, with vineyards, and with harvests crown'd.

It may either be so, or Homer intending solely to paint the laborious life of Laertes, added this circumstance of his increasing his rural cell by his industry, as an instance of it ; though the latter is more suitable to the character of a king.

Enter the house, and of the bristly swine

Select the largest to the pow'rs divine.

Alone, and unattended, let me try

If yet I share the old man's memory :

If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know,

250

(Their light and dearest object long ago)

Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with woe?

Then to his train he gives his spear and shield ;

The house they enter ; and he seeks the field,

Thro' rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd, 255

And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round.

Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there,

Nor servants, absent on another care ;

To search the woods for sets of flow'ry thorn,

Their orchard bounds to strengthen and adorn. 260

But all alone the hoary king he found ;

His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around ;

His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,

Fenc'd with a double cap of goatskin hair :

His buskins old, in former service torn,

265

But well repair'd ; and gloves against the thorn.

v. 266. ——— *gloves against the thorn.*] Casaubon in his remarks upon Athenæus, lib. xii. cap. 2. affirms, that antiently neither the Greeks nor the Romans ever wore any covering on their hands, which are now used so universally, that they are worn by the meanest people ; but this place is an instance of Casaubon's mistake : it is true, Xenophon gives this practice as an argument of the luxury and delicacy of the Persians, who suffered no part of the body to be exposed to the air, but wore καὶ περὶ ἀγκυαῖς ταῖς χερσὶ χειρίδας, καὶ δακτυλήθρας ἔχουσι, “ gloves upon their hands, “ and coverings on their very fingers.” Pliny the younger mentions the same custom amongst the Romans, “ Manus hieme manicis muniebantur ! ut ne cœli quidem asperitas ullum studiis “ tempus eriperet.” This then is the difference ; the Persians wore these hand-coverings out of effeminacy and delicacy ; whereas in Greece they were used only out of necessity, as a defence in rural labour, as appears from Laertes, they being never mentioned upon any other occasion, either in the Iliad or Odyssey. Dacier.

In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.

v. 267. *In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.*]

This is the first appearance of Laertes, he is the very picture of melancholy; his dress, his employ, and solitary life, all discover a fixed sorrow and contempt of the world. It has been a dispute whether we are to ascribe this retreat of Laertes to a meanness of spirit, who forsakes his station, and is unequal to adversity; or to wisdom, and a noble neglect of the pomp and splendour of the world, by which he prefers a little rural retreat to all the magnificence of a palace, and a small garden to all the dominions of a king. Plutarch severely censures his conduct: "A person (observes that writer) who wastes his age in his bed, or in trivial affairs, makes himself an object of contempt, as Homer teaches by the examples of Nestor and Laertes: Nestor, by engaging in the war of Troy, obtained the utmost veneration; while Laertes, who abandoned himself to solitude, was despised universally." I am unwilling to subscribe to this observation, being of opinion that the silent virtues of a good man in solitude are more amiable than all the noisy honours of active life. The picture of Laertes is undoubtedly drawn very naturally; a tender father is afflicted for the loss of a brave and beloved son; this bitter ingredient gives a disrelish to all the vanities of life; he is deprived of an object that he valued above the world, he therefore neglects it as having nothing worthy of his cares, and abandons it for privacy and tranquillity. Menedemus in Terence is the very copy of Laertes in Homer; an instance that he thought Homer's an exact representation of human nature; and the applause with which that comedy was received, shews that all Rome was of the same judgment. Sorrow loves to be alone, rather seeks for amusements than business and glory; and it may perhaps be true, that it shews more greatness of soul to resign a kingdom than to conquer it. Pride, ambition, and guilty passions have raised many to the top of human glory; but it evidences that a person is not influenced by vicious sentiments, who knows how to moderate his desires, and is able to retire from the splendour of a crown into obscurity. Tully mentions the manner of life in Laertes, without condemnation; the place is to be found in his Cato Major, where he speaks of the innocent amusements of old age, and illustrates his assertions by the example of Laertes. "Homerus Laertem lenientem desiderium, quod capiebat e filio, colentem agrum & stercorem facit." But Tully mistakes Homer, for Laertes is not found dunging his ground.

Perhaps instead of λισσεύοντα, he read κοπρήσοντα, as it is used in the seventeenth Odyssey.

————— Ὀδυσσῆος τέμεν μέγα κοπρήσοντες.

Beneath a neighb'ring tree, the chief divine
 Gaz'd o'er his fire, retracing ev'ry line, 270
 The ruins of himself ! now worn away
 With age, yet still majestic in decay !
 Sudden his eyes releas'd their wat'ry store ;
 The much enduring man could bear no more.
 Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace 275
 His aged limbs, to kiss his rev'rend face,
 With eager transport to disclose the whole,
 And pour at once the torrent of his soul.—
 Not so : his judgment takes the winding way
 Of question distant, and of soft essay ; 280
 More gentle methods on weak age employs ;
 And moves the sorrows, to enhance the joys.

Or perhaps he quoted by memory. I will only add, that Tully in his retirement at Tusculum, used to write to his friends, that he there led the life of Laertes : and Tully was too sensible of his own worth, to speak any thing to the disparagement of it.

v. 279. *Not so : his judgment takes the winding way.*] It has been objected, that Ulysses here acts contrary to filial piety, and permits a tender father to continue in his sorrows, when it was in his power immediately to make him happy, by a discovery of his person ; they likewise condemn the *μετρώμενα ἔπεα*, which Homer puts in the mouth of Ulysses. It must be allowed, that those words are frequently used by the poet in a bad sense, and signify “ heart-wounding, or reproachful words ;” but here they are not so to be understood ; they only imply, “ that Ulysses blamed Laertes out of tenderness for taking no more care of his person :” this is not a reproach, but the language of fondness and affection : or perhaps the poet meant to express that this enquiry raised images of sorrow in the soul of Laertes, and “ wounded his heart” by naming the lost Ulysses. Eustathius solves the former objection by saying that Ulysses delayed the discovery, lest the suddenness of joy should prove fatal to Laertes. But Homer undoubtedly paints according to nature ; Ulysses bursts into tears at the sight of his father, yet restrains them, and tries if after twenty years absence he was known by him ; this delay raises the reader's curiosity, makes him, as it were, present at the interview, and impatient to hear the manner of the discovery : besides, this procedure excellently agrees with the general character of Ulysses, who is upon all emergencies master of his passions, and remarkable for disguise and an artful dissimulation ; this disguise has a very happy effect in this place, it holds us in a pleasing suspense, and makes us wait with attention to see the issue of the interview.

Then, to his fire with beating heart he moves;
 And with a tender pleasantry reproves:
 Who digging round the plant still hangs his head, 285
 Nor ought remits the work, while thus he said.

Great is thy skill, oh father! great thy toil,
 Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the foil,
 Thy squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
 The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear; 290 }
 And not one empty spot escapes thy care.

On ev'ry plant and tree thy cares are shown,
 Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.

Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame;
 Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim. 295

Not for thy sloth, I deem thy lord unkind;
 Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind:

I read a monarch in that princely air,
 The same thy aspect, if the same thy care;

Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine, 300
 These are the rights of age, and should be thine.

Who then thy master, say? and whose the land
 So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?

But chief, oh tell me! (what I question most)
 Is this the far-fam'd Ithacensian coast? 305

For so reported the first man I view'd,
 (Some furly islander, of manners rude)

v. 298. *I read a monarch in that princely air.*] The words in the Greek are not without obscurity, and Eustathius explains them two ways; they may either signify, that Laertes appears to be a person of such distinction that he ought to live with more delicacy and dignity, viz. "to bathe, and after a due repast to sleep in state;" or they imply, that Laertes shews the dignity of a king in his person, who comes from the bath, and dines in state. Ulysses cannot compare Laertes to a king who is fresh from the bath and dress'd royally, for he tells us, he is covered with sweat and dust; he therefore means that his personage is noble, and like a king, that therefore he ought to live like a king, with respect to his food and his bath, and to indulge his age by allowing it ease and refreshment.

Nor farther conference vouchsaf'd to stay ;
 Heedless he whistl'd, and pursu'd his way.
 But thou ! whom years have taught to understand ; 310
 Humanely hear, and answer my demand :
 A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave,
 Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave ?
 Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)
 When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest ; 315
 He said, from Ithaca's fair isle he came,
 And old Laertes was his father's name.
 To him, whatever to a guest is ow'd
 I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd ;
 To him sev'n talents of pure ore I told, 320
 Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunics stiff with gold,
 A bowl, that rich with polish'd silver flames,
 And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.

At this the father, with a father's fears :
 (His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears.) 325
 'This is the land ; but ah ! thy gifts are lost,
 For godless men, and rude, possess the coast :
 Sunk is the glory of this once fam'd shore !
 Thy antient friend, oh stranger, is no more !
 Full recompence thy bounty else had borne ; 330
 For ev'ry good man yields a just return :
 So civil rights demand ; and who begins
 'The track of friendship, not pursuing, fins.
 But tell me, stranger, be the truth confest,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that guest ? 335
 That hapless guest, alas ! for ever gone !
 Wretch that he was ! and that I am ! my son !
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn !
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign, 340
 He lies a prey to monsters of the main,
 Or savage beasts his mangled reliques tear,
 Or screaming vultures scatter thro' the air :

Nor could his mother fun'ral unguents shed;
 Nor wail'd his father o'er th' untimely dead; 345
 Nor his sad comfort, on the mournful bier,
 Seal'd his cold eyes, or drop'd a tender tear!

But tell me, who thou art? and what thy race?
 Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place?
 Or if a merchant in pursuit of gain, 350
 What port receiv'd thy vessel from the main?
 Or com'st thou single, or attend thy train?

Then thus the son. From Alybas I came,
 My palace there; Eperitus my name,
 Not vulgar born; from Aphidas, the king 355
 Of Polypemon's royal line, I spring.
 Some adverse dæmon from Sicania bore
 Our wand'ring course, and drove us on your shore:
 Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
 Reliev'd our weary'd vessel from the sea. 360
 Five years have circled since these eyes pursu'd
 Ulysses parting thro' the fable flood;
 Prosp'rous he sail'd, with dexter auguries,
 And all the wing'd good omens of the skies.
 Well hop'd we, then, to meet on this fair shore, 365
 Whom heav'n, alas! decreed to meet no more.

Quick thro' the father's heart these accents ran;
 Grief seiz'd at once, and wrapt up all the man;

v. 353. ——— *From Alybas I came.*] Ulysses is inexhaustible in his fictions; he here accommodates the names of persons and places to his fortunes: Alybas is supposed to be a city of Italy, afterwards called Metapontium. It is placed by others in Thrace. It is here introduced to denote the wanderings of Ulysses by the sea, or ἄλῃ: the word "aphidas" denotes his generosity, which "spares nothing" towards his friends. He feigns himself to be the grandson of Πολυπύμων, to represent the multitude of his sufferings; his name is Eperitus, from ἐπήρις, the same with περιμάχη, from ἐρίζω, to shew the struggle that he has met with in all his adventures, as well as the toils in the war of Troy, and against other enemies. Eustathius.

Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.

370

Trembling with agonies of strong delight
Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the fight:

v. 369. ——— and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.]

This was a common practice among the antient orientals, in token of the extremity of sorrow; it was used among the Hebrews as well as Greeks; thus Ezek. xxvii. 30. "They shall cast dust upon their heads." Job ii. 12. "They rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads." Thus also Achilles in the eighteenth of the Iliad;

His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
Those he deforms in dust, and these he tears.

Homer calls it *κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν*, which does not mean that Laertes threw glowing embers on his head, for he was in his garden, where such ashes were not to be found, but he means *ξήραν*, or "dry dust," such as arises from substances consumed by fire, or resembling ashes. Eustathius.

v. 371. Trembling with agonies, &c.] The Greek expression is remarkable,

——— ἀνὰ ῥίνας δὲ οἱ ἦδ' ἔ
Δριμὺ μὲν  πρέτυψε ———

"A sharp sensation struck his nostrils." Eustathius judges, that the meaning is, that Ulysses perceived himself ready to burst into tears; a kind of a pricking sharp sensation being felt in the nostrils before the eruption of tears. Casaubon more fully explains it; he observes that all violent passions cause a sensation in the nostrils, arising from the ebullition of the spirits, which mount toward the brain; and endeavouring to free themselves from restraint, find a vent by the nostril, and crowding through it, dilate it in their passage; this is evident from animals, and the nobler kinds of them, as the bull, the horse, the lion, whose nostrils always dilate when moved to anger. A similar expression is found in the first Idyllium of Theocritus.

Καὶ οἱ αἰὲ δριμεῖα χολὰ πολλὰ ῥινὶ κάθηται.

He speaks of the anger of the god Pan, but it is applicable to all violence of passion. Aristotle (observes Dacier) quotes this verse as applied by Homer to express anger, cap. 8. of his morals to Nicomachus, but he is evidently in an error; for there is here no mention of anger: he undoubtedly trusted to his memory, it being sorrow arising from filial tenderness which moves Ulysses. Dacier.

He ran, he seiz'd him with a strict embrace,
 With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face,
 I, I am he; oh father rise! behold 375

Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old;
 Thy son, so long desir'd, so long detain'd,
 Restor'd, and breathing in his native land:
 These floods of sorrow, oh my sire, restrain!
 The vengeance is compleat; the suitor-train, 380
 Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands lie slain.

Amaz'd, Laertes. "Give some certain sign,
 " (If such thou art) to manifest thee mine."
 Lo here the wound (he cries) receiv'd of yore,
 The scar indented by the tusky boar, 385
 When by thyself and by Anticlea sent,
 To old Autolychus's realms I went.
 Yet by another sign thy offspring know;
 The sev'ral trees you gave me long ago,
 While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace, 390
 And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace;
 To ev'ry plant in order as we came,
 Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name,

v. 389. *The sev'ral trees you gave me long ago,
 While yet a child — — —*]

The word in the original is *παῖδρός*, which signifies "a very young boy:" Homer uses it to express the age, when out of a childish simplicity Ulysses asked his father to grant him such trees. Such requests are very natural in children, and we see (says Dacier) the same practis'd every day; parents out of fondness indulge the requests of their children in such little particularities, and a bird, an horse, &c. continues the child's favourite for many years. It must be allowed, that no poet ever followed nature so faithfully as Homer. Virgil perhaps has reached his noblest elevations and sublimities, but there is a greater variety of natural incidents, more exact pictures of human life in Homer than in all other poets. Some painters excel in the boldness of their figures, and know how to draw a hero or a god, but are less happy in lower subjects; but Homer draws universally, and is excellent upon all occasions; he paints the largest figures, or the least sketches, equally natural, and with equal beauty.

Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd; 394
 Twelve pear-trees bowing with their pendent load,
 And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd;
 Full fifty purple figs; and many a row
 Of various vines that then began to blow,
 A future vintage! when the hours produce
 Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice. 400

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,
 His heart within him melts; his knees sustain
 Their feeble weight no more; his arms alone
 Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown;
 He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd: 405
 Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.

Soon as returning life regains its seat,
 And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat;
 Yes, I believe (he cries) almighty Jove!
 Heav'n rules us yet, and gods there are above. 410

'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid—
 But what shall guard us, if the town invade?
 If, while the news thro' ev'ry city flies,
 All Ithaca and Cephalenia rise?

To this Ulysses. As the gods shall please 415
 Be all the rest; and set thy soul at ease.
 Haste to the cottage by this orchard side,
 And take the banquet which our cares provide:
 There wait thy faithful band of rural friends,
 And there the young Telemachus attends. 420

Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,
 And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.
 The swains and young Telemachus they found,
 The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.
 The hoary king, his old Sicilian maid 425
 Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.
 Pallas attending gives his frame to shine
 With awful port, and majesty divine;

His gazing son admires the god-like grace,
And air celestial dawning o'er his face. 430

What god, he cry'd, my father's form improves?
How high he treads, and how enlarg'd he moves?

Oh! would to all the deathless pow'rs on high,
Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!
(Reply'd the king, elated with his praise) 435

My strength were still, as once in better days:
When the bold Cephalens the leaguer form'd,
And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.
Such were I now, not absent from your deed
When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed, 440
This arm had aided yours; this hand bestrown
Our floors with death, and push'd the slaughter on;
Nor had the fire been sep'rate from the son. }

They commun'd thus; while homeward bent their way
The swains, fatigu'd with labours of the day; 445
Dolius the first, the venerable man;
And next his sons, a long succeeding train.
For due refection to the bow'r they came,
Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame,

v. 438. *And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.*] I doubt not but the reader has observed, that Laertes uses the very turn of language and manner of self-commendation so remarkable in almost all the speeches of Nestor: this is to be ascribed to the nature of old age in general, which loves a little to boast, and relates the exploits of youth with the utmost satisfaction; or as Horace describes it,

“ ———— Laudator temporis acti
“ Se puero” ————

I will only add, that the reason why Homer describes Laertes enlarged with strength and majesty by Minerva, is to reconcile the future story to probability; Laertes acts the hero, engages at the head of his friends, and kills the leader of his enemies; this might appear to be an exploit too great for a weak old man wasted away with sorrows: the poet therefore knowing that he had lost his natural vigour through age, supplies the defect with preternatural strength, and by this method renders him equal to his future action.

Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire; 450
 They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.
 On chairs and beds in order seated round,
 They share the gladsome board; the roofs resound.
 While thus Ulysses to his antient friend:

“ Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend; 455

“ The rites have waited long.” The chief commands

Their loves in vain; old Dolius spreads his hands,

Springs to his master with a warm embrace,

And fastens kisses on his hands and face;

Then thus broke out. Oh long, oh daily mourn'd!

Beyond our hopes, and to our wish, return'd! 461

Conducted sure by heav'n! for heav'n alone

Could work this wonder: welcome to thy own!

And joys and happiness attend thy throne!

Who knows thy blest, thy wish'd return? oh say,

To the chaste queen shall we the news convey? 466

Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day?

Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride

Already is it known (the king reply'd,

And straight resum'd his seat) while round him bows

Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows: 471

Then all beneath their father take their place,

Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying fame the swift report had spread

Thro' all the city, of the suitors dead. 475

In throngs they rise, and to the palace crowd;

Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.

Weeping they bear the mangled heaps of slain,

Inhume the natives in their native plain,

The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main. 480

v. 450. *Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire.*] We are not to imagine that this Sicilian was the wife of Dolius; Homer gives her the title of mother to his children, because she had the care of their education; for he adds, ἡ Ἐφείας τρέφε, she was their nurse, not their mother. Dacier.

v. 480. *The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main.*] To understand this, we must remember that many of the suitors came from

Then sad in council all the seniors fate,
 Frequent and full, assembled to debate.
 Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
 Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes:
 The bold Antinous was his age's pride, 485
 The first who by Ulysses' arrow dy'd.
 Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
 As mixing words with sighs, he thus began.

Great deeds, oh friends! this wond'rous man has
 wrought,

And mighty blessings to his country brought. 490
 With ships he parted and a num'rous train,
 Those, and their ships he bury'd in the main.
 Now he returns, and first essays his hand
 In the best blood of all his native land.
 Haste then, and ere to neighb'ring Pyle he flies, 495
 Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies;
 Arise (or ye for ever fall) arise!
 Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed!
 If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed.
 Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head, 500
 Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall
 Spoke when he ceas'd: dumb sorrow touch'd them all.
 When from the palace to the wond'ring throng
 Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along; 505
 (Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke)
 And Medon first th' assembled chiefs bespoke.

Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
 Who deem this act the work of mortal hand;

the neighbouring islands, Samos, Zacynthus, &c. and therefore they are said to be transported by sea, to be buried in their native countries: this custom prevailed over all the oriental world: but there may be a particular reason why this is done by the Ithacans; they might intend to raise those several islands to engage against Ulysses, and draw them to arms by such moving spectacles. Dacier.

v. 508. *Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land.*] There is great art in the speeches of Medon and Eupithes: Eupithes said

As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode, 510
 These eyes, these eyes beheld a present god,
 Who now before him, now beside him stood,
 Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with blood :
 In vain old Mentor's form the god bely'd ;
 'Twas heav'n that struck, and heav'n was on his side.

A sudden horror all th' assembly shook, 516
 When slowly rising, Halitherses spoke :
 (Rev'rend and wise, whose comprehensive view
 At once the present and the future knew)
 Me too ye fathers hear ! from you proceed 520
 The ills ye mourn ; your own the guilty deed.

that Ulysses had slain the bravest of the Greeks : Medon allows it, but adds, that it was done by the will of the gods : the consequence therefore is, that to fight against Ulysses upon this account, is to fight against the gods. Eupithes applies to their revenge, Medon to their fears ; Eupithes sheds tears to move their compassion, Medon intimidates them by averring that the assistance of the gods was visible on the side of Ulysses. The persons likewise whom Homer employs to plead against Eupithes are well chosen ; Halitherses is a prophet, Medon an herald, and both persons esteemed sacred by their offices ; this is the reason why the Greeks are said to be struck with awe at their appearance. Dacier, &c.

v. 517. ————— *Halitherses spoke.*] The speech of Medon had a good effect upon the audience ; for Homer adds, that the whole assembly grew afraid ; Halitherses perceived it, and seconds it. He insists upon a new head of persuasion, and sets forth the justice of the late action of Ulysses : the suitors were slain (says he) for their crimes, and you are guilty for not restraining their outrages ; and then to deter them from their present designs, he represents their danger in engaging against their king. From these speeches (observes Eustathius) Homer draws the probability of the future part of the story ; he divides the enemy, and wins over almost half of their numbers ; whereas, had they proceeded unanimously, Ulysses must necessarily have perished by their power.

It is observable, that though Phemius accompanies Medon, yet he is silent ; the reason is, he as it were speaks by the mouth of Medon, he was witness to the assistance of heaven on the part of Ulysses, and approves and confirms by his presence the truth of his testimony. It is thus on the stage where the whole chorus was antiently supposed to speak by the mouth of their prolocutor, Dacier, &c.

Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons the rein,
 (Oft' warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain)
 An absent hero's bed they sought to foil,
 An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil: 525
 Immod'rate riot, and intemp'rate lust!
 Th' offence was great, the punishment was just.
 Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale,
 Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail.

His mod'rate words some better minds persuade:
 They part, and join him; but the number stay'd. 531
 They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,
 And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.
 They case their limbs in brags; to arms they run;
 The broad effulgence blazes in the sun. 535
 Before the city, and in ample plain,
 They meet: Eupithes heads the frantic train.
 Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air;
 Fate hears them not, and death attends him there.

This pass on earth, while in the realms above 540
 Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove.
 May I presume to search thy secret soul!
 Oh pow'r supreme, oh ruler of the whole!

v. 541. *Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove.*] Homer, to give importance to the conclusive action of his poem, introduces Jupiter and Minerva in debate about the event of it. At the beginning of the *Odyssey* he describes the gods in consultation for the re-establishment of Ulysses: in the conclusion of it, we see Jupiter himself rewarding the virtue and bravery of Ulysses, and decreeing him to reign in peace and tranquillity. This is carried on with great judgment: we are fully satisfied that the action of the *Odyssey* is compleated in the happiness of the hero, when we hear Jupiter giving his sanction to it. Besides, it leaves a noble image of the greatness of Ulysses, and of the whole story of the *Odyssey*, upon the reader's mind, when we see it is of such weight as to engage Jupiter in its favour. Thus in imitation of Homer, toward the conclusion of the *Æneid*, Virgil describes Jupiter and Juno in debate concerning the decisive action between Turnus and Æneas.

Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state

Or peaceful amity, or stern debate?

545

Declare thy purpose; for thy will is fate.

Is not thy thought my own? (the god replies
Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies)

Hath not long since thy knowing soul decreed,

The chief's return should make the guilty bleed?

'Tis done, and at thy will the fates succeed.

551

Yet hear the issue: since Ulysses' hand

Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.

None now the kindred of th' unjust shall own;

Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son:

555

Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,

And o'er the past, oblivion stretch her wing.

Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,

His people blessing, by his people blest.

Let all be peace—He said, and gave the nod

560

That binds the fates; the sanction of the god:

And prompt to execute th' eternal will,

Descended Pallas from th' Olympian hill.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast,

The rage of hunger and of thirst repress:

565

To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent:

A son of Dolius on the message went,

v. 552. ———— *since Ulysses' hand*

Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.]

The design of the *Odyssey* is to shew virtue rewarded, and vice punished; here to introduce this act of justice with the greater solemnity, Jupiter is represented giving his assent to it: "Let there be peace (says that deity) but let justice be done, and the guilty punished;" the reader must necessarily be satisfied with the equity of the cause of Ulysses, when he hears Jupiter himself directing in it. Besides, this conduct of Homer presents us with an excellent moral; it shews us that the Deity is the governour of human affairs, and arbiter of peace and war; as he directs, the scenes of blood are opened or closed, and the words of Homer, *δὶος δ' ἐτελείετο βολή*, may be applied to the *Odyssey* as well as the *Iliad*.

Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
 The foe approach, embattl'd on the field.
 With backward step he hastens to the bow'r, 570
 And tells the news. They arm with all their pow'r.
 Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace,
 And six were all the sons of Dolius' race:
 Old Dolius too his rusted arms put on;
 And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone. 575
 Trembling with wrath, the hoary heroes stand,
 And brazen panoply invests the band.
 The opening gates at once their war display:
 Fierce they rush forth: Ulysses leads the way.
 That moment joins them with celestial aid, 580
 In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended maid:
 The suff'ring hero felt his patient breast
 Swell with new joy, and thus his son address.
 Behold, Telemachus! (nor fear the fight)
 The brave embattl'd; the grim front of fight! 585
 The valiant with the valiant must contend:
 Shame not the line whence glorious you descend,
 Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread;
 Regard thyself, the living and the dead.

v. 572. *Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace.*] The poet tells us the exact number of the party of Ulysses, which consisted of ten persons under the direction of Dolius, Laertes, and Ulysses: how many were under Eupithes is uncertain, we therefore are at liberty to suppose them more or less superiour in number; Medon and Halitherses had withdrawn almost half of his assistants, and by that method reduced the enemy to a greater equality: it is probable that they had no very extraordinary inequality, for the onset is so sudden, that the friends of the dead suitors could not have time to embody; besides, it appears from the sixteenth *Odyssey*, that of the whole band of suitors, twelve only were Ithacans, the rest came from the adjacent islands, and therefore none of their friends could as yet be arrived to assist Eupithes, and consequently this party consisted solely of Ithacans, and were not perhaps greatly superiour to Ulysses. This observation likewise furnishes us with a reason why the enemy was so easily defeated, by so small a body of men as engaged for Ulysses.

Thy eyes, great father! on this battle cast, 590
Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.

So spoke Telemachus! the gallant boy
Good old Laertes heard with panting joy;
And blest! thrice blest this happy day! he cries,
The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes, 595
A son and grandson of th' Arcean name
Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame!

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear:
Son of Arcegius, rev'rend warrior, hear!
Jove and Jove's daughter first implore in pray'r, 600
Then whirling high, discharge thy lance in air,
She said, infusing courage with the word.
Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implor'd,
And whirling high, dismiss the lance in air,
Full at Eupithes drove the deathful spear: 605
The brass-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound;
He falls, earth thunders, and his arms resound.

Before the father and the conqu'ring son
Heaps rush on heaps; they fight, they drop, they run.
Now by the sword and now the jav'lin fall 610
The rebel race, and death had swallow'd all;
But from on high the blue-ey'd virgin cry'd;
Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide.
"Forbear ye nations! your mad hands forbear
"From mutual slaughter: peace descends to spare."
Fear shook the nations: at the voice divine 616
They drop their jav'lins, and their rage resign.
All scatter'd round their glitt'ring weapons lie;
Some fall to earth, and some confus'dly fly.

v. 605. *Full at Eupithes drove the deathful spear.*] Eustathius calls this an admirable incident, or change of fortune in favour of Ulysses. The son of Eupithes is slain by the son of Laertes, and the father of Antinous by the father of Ulysses. We now see Ulysses happy in his wife, his son, and his father; victorious over his enemies, and his subjects submitting to his authority; and therefore the action is now compleat, and terminates with the Odyssey.

With dreadful shouts Ulysses pour'd along, 620
Swift as an eagle, as an eagle strong.

But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims;
Before Minerva shot the livid flames;

Blazing they fell, and at her feet expir'd:
Then stopt the goddess, trembled, and retir'd. 625

Descended from the gods! Ulysses, cease;
Offend not Jove: obey, and give the peace.

So Pallas spoke: the mandate from above
The king obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove
In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord, 630
“ And willing nations knew their lawful lord.”

v. 629. ——— *The virgin-seed of Jove*
In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord.]

The meaning of the passage is no more than this, when stript of its poetical ornaments: Mentor, a person of great wisdom, acts as a mediator between the king and his subjects, he regulates the conditions of peace, and ratifies it with sacrifices to the gods; this being an act of wisdom, poetry ascribes it to Minerva.

I must observe with what dignity Homer concludes the *Odyssey*: to honour his hero, he introduces two deities, Jupiter and Pallas, who interest themselves in his cause: he then paints Ulysses in the boldest colours, as he rushes upon the enemy with the utmost intrepidity, and his courage is so ungovernable, that Jupiter is forced to restrain it with his thunder. It is usual for orators to reserve the strongest arguments for the conclusion, that they may leave them fresh upon the reader's memory; Homer uses the same conduct, he represents his hero in all his terrour, he shews him to be irresistible, and by this method leaves us fully possess'd with a noble idea of his magnanimity.

It has been already observed, that the end of the action of the *Odyssey* is the re-establishment of Ulysses in full peace and tranquillity; this is not effected, till the defeat of the suitors friends: and therefore if the poet had concluded before this event, the *Odyssey* had been imperfect. It was necessary that the reader should not only be informed of the return of Ulysses to his country and the punishment of the suitors, but of his re-establishment by a peaceful possession of his regal authority; which is not executed, till these last disorders rais'd by Eupithes are settled by the victory of Ulysses, and therefore this is the natural conclusion of the action.

This book opens with the morning, and ends before night, so that the whole story of the *Odyssey* is comprehended in the com-

pafs of one and forty days. Monsieur Dacier upon Aristotle remarks, that an epic poem ought not to be too long: we should be able to retain all the feveral parts of it at once in our memory: if we lofe the idea of the beginning when we come to the conclufion, it is an argument that it is of too large an extent, and its length deftroys its beauty. What feems to favour this decifion is, that the *Æneid*, *Iliad*, and *Odysſey* are conformable to this rule of Aristotle, and every one of thoſe poems may be read in the compaſs of a ſingle day.

I have now gone through the collections upon the *Odysſey*, and laid together what occurred moſt remarkable in this excellent poem. I am not ſo vain as to think theſe remarks free from faults, nor ſo diſingenuous as not to confeſs them: all writers have occaſion for indulgence, and thoſe moſt who leaſt acknowledge it. I have ſometimes uſed Madam Dacier as ſhe has done others, in tranſcribing ſome of her remarks without particulariſing them; but indeed it was through inadvertency only that her name is ſometimes omitted at the bottom of the note. If my performance has merit, either in theſe, or in my part of the tranſlation (namely in the ſixth, eleventh, and eighteenth books) it is but juſt to attribute it to the judgment and care of Mr. Pope, by whoſe hand every ſheet was corrected. His other, and much more able aſſiſtant, was Mr. Fenton, in the fourth and the twentieth books. It was our particular requeſt, that our ſeveral parts might not be made known to the world till the end of it: and if they have had the good fortune not to be diſtinguiſhed from his, we ought to be the leſs vain, ſince the reſemblance proceeds much leſs from our diligence and ſtudy to copy his manner, than from his own daily reviſal and correction. The moſt experienced painters will not wonder at this, who very well know, that no critic can pronounce even of the pieces of Raphael or Titian, which have, or which have not, been worked upon by thoſe of their ſchool? when the ſame maſter's hand has directed the execution of the whole, reduced it to one character and colouring, gone over the ſeveral parts, and given to each their finiſhing.

I muſt not conclude without declaring our mutual ſatisfaction in Mr. Pope's acceptance of our beſt endeavours, which have contributed at leaſt to his more ſpeedy execution of this great undertaking. If ever my name be numbered with the learned, I muſt aſcribe it to his friendship, in tranſmitting it to poſterity by a participation in his labours. May the ſenſe I have of this, and other inſtances of that friendship, be known as long as his name will cauſe mine to laſt: and may I to this end be permitted, at the conclufion of a work which is a kind of monument of his partiality to me, to place the following lines, as an inſcription memorial of it.

LET vulgar souls triumphal arches raise
Or speaking marbles to record their praise;
And picture (to the voice of fame unknown)
The mimic feature on the breathing stone:
Mere mortals! subject to death's total sway,
Reptiles of earth, and beings of a day!

'Tis thine, on ev'ry heart to grave thy praise,
A monument which worth alone can raise:
Sure to survive, when time shall whelm in dust
The arch, the marble, and the mimic bust:
Nor 'till the volumes of th' expanded sky
Blaze in one flame, shalt thou and Homer die:
Then sink together, in the world's last fires,
What heav'n created, and what heav'n inspires.

If ought on earth, when once this breath is fled,
With human transport touch the mighty dead:
Shakespear, rejoice! his hand thy page refines;
Now ev'ry scene with native brightness shines;
Just to thy fame, he gives thy genuine thought;
So Tully publish'd what Lucretius wrote;
Prun'd by his care, thy laurels loftier grow,
And bloom afresh on thy immortal brow.

Thus when thy draughts, O Raphael! time invades,
And the bold figure from the canvass fades,
A rival hand recalls from every part
Some latent grace, and equals art with art;
Transported we survey the dubious strife,
While each fair image starts again to life.

How long, untun'd, had Homer's sacred lyre
Jarr'd grating discord, all extinct his fire?
This you beheld; and taught by heav'n to sing,
Call'd the loud music from the sounding string;
Now wak'd from slumbers of three thousand years,
Once more Achilles in dread pomp appears,

Tow'rs o'er the field of death ; as fierce he turns,
 Keen flash his arms, and all the hero burns ;
 With martial stalk, and more than mortal might,
 He strides along, and meets the gods in fight :
 Then the pale Titans, chain'd on burning floors,
 Start at the din that rends th' infernal shores ;
 Tremble the tow'rs of heav'n, earth rocks her coasts,
 And gloomy Pluto shakes with all his ghosts.
 To ev'ry theme responds thy various lay ;
 Here rolls a torrent, there meanders play ;
 Sonorous as the storm thy numbers rise,
 Toss the wild waves, and thunder in the skies ;
 Or softer than a yielding virgin's sigh,
 The gentle breezes breathe away and die.
 Thus, like the radiant god who sheds the day,
 You paint the vale, or gild the azure way ;
 And while with ev'ry theme the verse complies,
 Sink without groveling, without rashness rise.

Proceed, great bard ! awake th' harmonious string,
 Be ours all Homer ! still Ulysses sing.
 How long * that hero, by unskilful hands,
 Stript of his robes, a beggar trod our lands :
 Such as he wander'd o'er his native coast,
 Shrunk by the wand, and all the warriour lost ?
 O'er his smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread ;
 Old age disgrac'd the honours of his head :
 Nor longer in his heavy eye-ball shin'd
 The glance divine, forth beaming from the mind.
 But you like Pallas, ev'ry limb infold
 With royal robes, and bid him in shine in gold ;
 Touch'd by your hand, his manly frame improves
 With grace divine, and like a god he moves.

Ev'n I, the meanest of the muse's train,
 Inflam'd by thee, attempt a nobler strain ;

Advent'rous waken the Mæonian lyre,
Tun'd by your hand, and sing as you inspire:
So arm'd by great Achilles for the fight,
Patroclus conquer'd in Achilles' right:
Like theirs, our friendship! and I boast my name
To thine united—For thy FRIENDSHIP'S FAME.

This labour past, of heav'nly subjects sing,
While hov'ring angels listen on the wing,
To hear from earth such heart-felt raptures rise,
As, when they sing, suspended hold the skies:
Or nobly rising in fair virtue's cause,
From thy own life transcribe th' unerring laws:
Teach a bad world beneath her sway to bend;
To verse like thine fierce savages attend,
And men more fierce: when Orpheus tunes the lay,
Ev'n fiends relenting hear their rage away.

W. BROOME.

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POSTSCRIPT.

By Mr. P O P E.

I Cannot dismiss this work without a few observations on the true character and style of it. Whoever reads the *Odyfsey* with an eye to the *Iliad*, expecting to find it of the same character, or of the same sort of spirit, will be grievously deceived, and err against the first principle of criticism, which is to consider the nature of the piece, and the intent of its author. The *Odyfsey* is a moral and political work, instructive to all degrees of men, and filled with images, examples and precepts of civil and domestic life. Homer is here a person

“ Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat, & quid amicis,
 “ Quo fit amore parens, quo frater amandus, &
 “ hospes:
 “ Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile,
 “ quid non,
 “ Plenius & melius Chrysippo & Crantore dicit.”

The *Odyfsey* is the reverse of the *Iliad*, in moral, subject, manner and style; to which it has no sort of relation, but as the story happens to follow in order of time, and as some of the same persons are actors in it. Yet from this incidental connection many have been misled to regard it as a continuation or second part, and thence to expect a parity of character inconsistent with its nature.

It is no wonder that the common reader should fall into this mistake, when so great a critic as Longinus

seems not wholly free from it; although what he has said has been generally understood to import a severer censure of the *Odyssy* than it really does, if we consider the occasion on which it is introduced, and the circumstances to which it is confined.

“ The *Odyssy* (says he) is an instance, how natural it is to a great genius, when it begins to grow old and decline, to delight itself in narrations and fables. For, that Homer composed the *Odyssy* after the *Iliad*, many proofs may be given, &c. From hence in my judgment it proceeds, that as the *Iliad* was written while his spirit was in its greatest vigour, the whole structure of that work is dramatic and full of action; whereas the greater part of the *Odyssy* is employed in narration, which is the taste of old age: so that in this latter piece we may compare him to the setting sun, which has still the same greatness, but not the same ardour, or force. He speaks not in the same strain; we see no more that sublime of the *Iliad* which marches on with a constant pace, without ever being stopped, or retarded; there appears no more that hurry, and that strong tide of motions and passions, pouring one after another: there is no more of the same fury, or the same volubility of diction, so suitable to action, and all along drawing in such innumerable images of nature. But Homer, like the ocean, is always great, even when he ebbs and retires; even when he is lowest, and loses himself most in narrations and incredible fictions; as instances of this, we cannot forget the descriptions of tempests, the adventures of Ulysses with the Cyclops, and many others. But though all this be age, it is the age of Homer——And it may be said for the credit of these fictions, that they are beautiful dreams, or if you will, the dreams of Jupiter himself. I spoke of the *Odyssy* only to show, that the greatest poets when their genius wants strength and warmth for the pathetic, for the most part employ themselves in painting the manners. This Homer has done, in characterising the suitors, and describing their

“ way of life ; which is properly a branch of comedy,
“ whose peculiar business it is to represent the man-
“ ners of men.”

We must first observe, it is the sublime of which Longinus is writing : that, and not the nature of Homer's poem, is his subject. After having highly extolled the sublimity and fire of the Iliad, he justly observes the Odyssey to have less of those qualities, and to turn more on the side of moral, and reflections on human life. Nor is it his business here to determine, whether the elevated spirit of the one, or the just moral of the other, be the greater excellence in itself.

Secondly, that fire and fury of which he is speaking, cannot well be meant of the general spirit and inspiration which is to run through a whole epic poem, but of that particular warmth and impetuosity necessary in some parts, to image or represent actions or passions, of haste, tumult, and violence. It is on occasion of citing some such particular passages in Homer, that Longinus breaks into this reflection ; which seems to determine his meaning chiefly to that sense.

Upon the whole, he affirms the Odyssey to have less sublimity and fire than the Iliad, but he does not say it wants the sublime or wants fire. He affirms it to be narrative, but not that the narration is defective. He affirms it to abound in fictions, not that those fictions are ill invented, or ill executed. He affirms it to be nice and particular in painting the manners, but not that those manners are ill painted. If Homer has fully in these points accomplished his own design, and done all that the nature of his poem demanded or allowed, it still remains perfect in its kind, and as much a master-piece as the Iliad.

The amount of the passage is this ; that in his own particular taste, and with respect to the sublime, Longinus preferred the Iliad : and because the Odyssey was less active and lofty, he judged it the work of the old age of Homer.

If this opinion be true, it will only prove, that Homer's age might determine him in the choice of his subject, not that it affected him in the execution

of it: and that which would be a very wrong instance to prove the decay of his imagination, is a very good one to evince the strength of his judgment. For had he (as Madam Dacier observes) composed the *Odyſſey* in his youth, and the *Iliad* in his age, both muſt in reaſon have been exactly the ſame as they now ſtand. To blame Homer for his choice of ſuch a ſubject, as did not admit the ſame incidents and the ſame pomp of ſtyle as his former, is to take offence at too much variety, and to imagine, that when a man has written one good thing, he muſt ever after only copy himſelf.

The *Battle of Conſtantine*, and the *School of Athens*, are both pieces of Raphael: ſhall we cenſure the *School of Athens* as faulty, becauſe it has not the fury and fire of the other? Or ſhall we ſay, that Raphael was grown grave and old, becauſe he choſe to repreſent the manners of old men and philoſophers? There is all the ſilence, tranquillity and compoſure in the one, and all the warmth, hurry and tumult in the other, which the ſubject of either required: both of them had been imperfect, if they had not been as they are. And let the painter or poet be young or old, who deſigns and performs in this manner, it proves him to have made the piece at a time of life when he was maſter not only of his art, but of his diſcretion.

Ariſtotle makes no ſuch diſtinction between the two poems: he conſtantly cites them with equal praiſe, and draws the rules and examples of epic writing equally from both. But it is rather to the *Odyſſey* that Horace gives the preference, in the *Epistle to Lollius*, and in the *Art of Poetry*. It is remarkable how oppoſite his opinion is to that of Longinus; and that the particulars he chuſes to extol, are thoſe very fictions and pictures of the manners which the other ſeems leaſt to approve. Thoſe fables and manners are of the very eſſence of the work: but even without that regard, the fables themſelves have both more invention and more inſtruction, and the manners more moral and example, than thoſe of the *Iliad*.

In ſome points (and thoſe the moſt eſſential to the epic poem) the *Odyſſey* is confeſſed to excel the *Iliad*;

and principally in the great end of it, the moral. The conduct, turn, and disposition of the fable is also what the critics allow to be the better model for epic writers to follow: accordingly we find much more of the cast of this poem than of the other in the *Æneid*, and (what next to that is perhaps the greatest example) in the *Telemachus*. In the manners, it is no way inferior: Longinus is so far from finding any defect in these, that he rather taxes Homer with painting them too minutely. As to the narrations, although they are more numerous as the occasions are more frequent, yet they carry no more the marks of old age, and are neither more prolix nor more circumstantial, than the conversations and dialogues of the *Iliad*. Not to mention the length of those of Phœnix in the ninth book, and of Nestor in the eleventh (which may be thought in compliance to their characters), those of Glaucus in the sixth, of *Æneas* in the twentieth, and some others, must be allowed to exceed any in the whole *Odyssey*. And that the propriety of style, and the numbers, in the narrations of each are equal, will appear to any who compare them.

To form a right judgment, whether the genius of Homer had suffered any decay; we must consider, in both his poems, such parts as are of a similar nature, and will bear comparison. And it is certain we shall find in each, the same vivacity and fecundity of invention, the same life and strength of imaging and colouring, the particular descriptions as highly painted, the figures as bold, the metaphors as animated, and the numbers as harmonious and as various.

The *Odyssey* is a perpetual source of poetry: the stream is not the less full, for being gentle; though it is true (when we speak only with regard to the sublime) that a river, foaming and thundering in cataracts from rocks and precipices, is what more strikes, amazes and fills the mind, than the same body of water, flowing afterwards through peaceful vales and agreeable scenes of pasturage.

The *Odyssey* (as I have before said) ought to be considered according to its own nature and design, not

with an eye to the Iliad. To censure Homer because it is unlike what it was never meant to resemble, is, as if a gardener who had purposely cultivated two beautiful trees of contrary natures, as a specimen of his skill in the several kinds, should be blamed for not bringing them into pairs; when in root, stem, leaf, and flower, each was so intirely different, that one must have been spoiled in the endeavour to match the other.

Longinus, who saw this poem was “partly of the nature of comedy,” ought not, for that very reason, to have considered it with a view to the Iliad. How little any such resemblance was the intention of Homer, may appear from hence, that although the character of Ulysses there was already drawn, yet here he purposely turns to another side of it, and shows him not in that full light of glory, but in the shade of common life, with a mixture of such qualities as are requisite to all the lowest accidents of it, struggling with misfortunes, and on a level with the meanest of mankind. As for the other persons, none of them are above what we call the higher comedy: Calypso, though a goddess, is a character of intrigue; the suitors yet more approaching to it; the Phæacians are of the same cast; the Cyclops, Melanthius, and Irus, descend even to droll characters; and the scenes that appear throughout, are generally of the comic kind; banquets, revels, sports, loves, and the pursuit of a woman.

From the nature of the poem, we shall form an idea of the style. The diction is to follow the images, and to take its colour from the complexion of the thoughts. Accordingly the Odyssey is not always cloathed in the majesty of verse proper to tragedy, but sometimes descends into the plainer narrative, and sometimes even to that familiar dialogue essential to comedy. However, where it cannot support a sublimity, it always preserves a dignity, or at least a propriety.

There is a real beauty in an easy, pure, perspicuous description even of a low action. There are numerous instances of this both in Homer and Virgil;

and perhaps those natural passages are not the least pleasing of their works. It is often the same in history, where the representations of common, or even domestic things, in clear, plain, and natural words, are frequently found to make the liveliest impression on the reader.

The question is, how far a poet, in pursuing the description or image of an action, can attach himself to little circumstances, without vulgarity or trifling? What particulars are proper, and enliven the image; or what are impertinent, and clog it? In this matter painting is to be consulted, and the whole regard had to those circumstances which contribute to form a full, and yet not a confused, idea of a thing.

Epithets are of vast service to this effect, and the right use of these is often the only expedient to render the narration poetical.

The great point of judgment is to distinguish when to speak simply, and when figuratively: but whenever the poet is obliged by the nature of his subject to descend to the lower manner of writing, an elevated style would be affected, and therefore ridiculous; and the more he was forced upon figures and metaphors to avoid that lowness, the more the image would be broken, and consequently obscure.

One may add, that the use of the grand style on little subjects, is not only ludicrous, but a sort of transgression against the rules of proportion and mechanics: it is using a vast force to lift a feather.

I believe, now I am upon this head, it will be found a just observation, that the low actions of life cannot be put into a figurative style without being ridiculous, but things natural can. Metaphors raise the latter into dignity, as we see in the *Georgics*: but throw the former into ridicule, as in the *Lutrin*. I think this may very well be accounted for: laughter implies censure; inanimate and irrational beings are not objects of censure; therefore these may be elevated as much as you please, and no ridicule follows: but when rational beings are represented above their real character, it becomes ridiculous in art, because it is vicious in

morality. The bees in Virgil, were they rational beings, would be ridiculous by having their actions and manners represented on a level with creatures so superior as men; since it would imply folly or pride, which are the proper objects of ridicule.

The use of pompous expression for low actions or thoughts is the true sublime of Don Quixote. How far unfit it is for epic poetry, appears in its being the perfection of the mock epic. It is so far from being the sublime of tragedy, that it is the cause of all bombast; when poets, instead of being (as they imagine) constantly lofty, only preserve throughout a painful equality of fustian: that continued swell of language (which runs indiscriminately even through their lowest characters, and rattles like some mightiness of meaning in the most indifferent subjects) is of a piece with that perpetual elevation of tone which the players have learned from it; and which is not speaking, but vociferating.

There is still more reason for a variation of style in epic poetry than in tragic, to distinguish between that language of the gods proper to the muse who sings, and is inspired: and that of men who are introduced speaking only according to nature. Farther, there ought to be a difference of style observed in the speeches of human persons, and those of deities; and again, in those which may be called set harangues, or orations, and those which are only conversation or dialogue. Homer has more of the latter than any other poet: what Virgil does by two or three words of narration, Homer still performs by speeches: not only replies, but even rejoinders are frequent in him, a practice almost unknown to Virgil. This renders his poems more animated, but less grave and majestic; and consequently necessitates the frequent use of a lower style. The writers of tragedy lie under the same necessity, if they would copy nature; whereas that painted and poetical diction which they perpetually use, would be improper even in orations designed to move with all the arts of rhetoric: this is plain from the practice of Demosthenes and Cicero; and Virgil in those of

Drances and Turnus gives an eminent example, how far removed the style of them ought to be from such an excess of figures and ornaments: which indeed fits only that language of the gods we have been speaking of, or that of a muse under inspiration.

To read through a whole work in this strain, is like travelling all along on the ridge of a hill; which is not half so agreeable as sometimes gradually to rise, and sometimes gently to descend, as the way leads, and as the end of the journey directs.

Indeed the true reason that so few poets have imitated Homer in these lower parts, has been the extreme difficulty of preserving that mixture of ease and dignity essential to them. For it is as hard for an epic poem to stoop to the narrative with success, as for a prince to descend to be familiar, without diminution to his greatness.

The sublime style is more easily counterfeited than the natural; something that passes for it, or sounds like it, is common in all false writers: but nature, purity, perspicuity, and simplicity, never walk in the clouds; they are obvious to all capacities; and where they are not evident, they do not exist.

The most plain narration not only admits of these, and of harmony (which are all the qualities of style) but it requires every one of them to render it pleasing. On the contrary, whatever pretends to a share of the sublime, may pass, notwithstanding any defects in the rest; nay, sometimes without any of them, and gain the admiration of all ordinary readers.

Homer, in his lowest narrations or speeches, is ever easy, flowing, copious, clear, and harmonious. He shows not less invention, in assembling the humbler, than the greater, thoughts and images; nor less judgment, in proportioning the style and the versification to these, than to the other. Let it be remembered, that the same genius that soared the highest, and from whom the greatest models of the sublime are derived, was also he who stooped the lowest, and gave to the simple narrative its utmost perfection. Which of these was the harder task to Homer himself, I cannot pre-

tend to determine ; but to his translator I can affirm (however unequal all his imitations must be) that of the latter has been much more difficult.

Whoever expects here the same pomp of verse, and the same ornaments of diction, as in the Iliad, he will, and he ought to be, disappointed. Were the original otherwise, it had been an offence against nature ; and were the translation so, it were an offence against Homer, which is the same thing.

It must be allowed that there is a majesty and harmony in the Greek language which greatly contribute to elevate and support the narration. But I must also observe that this is an advantage grown upon the language since Homer's time ; for things are removed from vulgarity by being out of use : and if the words we could find in any present language were equally sonorous or musical in themselves, they would still appear less poetical and uncommon than those of a dead one, from this only circumstance, of being in every man's mouth. I may add to this another disadvantage to a translator, from a different cause : Homer seems to have taken upon him the character of an historian, antiquary, divine, and professor of arts and sciences, as well as a poet. In one or other of these characters he descends into many particularities, which as a poet only perhaps he would have avoided. All these ought to be preserved by a faithful translator, who in some measure takes the place of Homer ; and all that can be expected from him is to make them as poetical as the subject will bear. Many arts therefore are requisite to supply these disadvantages, in order to dignify and solemnize these plainer parts, which hardly admit of any poetical ornaments.

Some use has been made to this end of the style of Milton. A just and moderate mixture of old words may have an effect like the working old abbey stones into a building, which I have sometimes seen to give a kind of venerable air, and yet not destroy the neatness, elegance, and equality requisite to a new work ; I mean without rendering it too unfamiliar, or remote from the present purity of writing, or from that ease and smooth-

ness which ought always to accompany narration or dialogue. In reading a style judiciously antiquated, one finds a pleasure not unlike that of travelling on an old Roman way : but then the road must be as good, as the way is antient ; the style must be such in which we may evenly proceed, without being put to short stops by sudden abruptnesses, or puzzled by frequent turnings and transpositions. No man delights in furrows and stumblings-blocks : and let our love to antiquity be ever so great, a fine ruin is one thing, and a heap of rubbish another. The imitators of Milton, like most other imitators, are not copies but caricatura's of their original ; they are a hundred times more obsolete and cramp than he, and equally so in all places : whereas it should have been observed of Milton, that he is not lavish of his exotic words and phrases every where alike, but employs them much more where the subject is marvellous, vast and strange, as in the scenes of heaven, hell, chaos, &c. than where it is turned to the natural and agreeable, as in the pictures of paradise, the loves of our first parents, the entertainments of angels, and the like. In general, this unusual style better serves to awaken our ideas in the descriptions and in the imaging and picturesque parts, than it agrees with the lower sort of narrations, the character of which is simplicity and purity. Milton has several of the latter, where we find not an antiquated, affected, or uncouth word, for some hundred lines together ; as in his fifth book, the latter part of the eighth, the former of the tenth and eleventh books, and in the narration of Michael in the twelfth. I wonder indeed that he, who ventured (contrary to the practice of all other epic poets) to imitate Homer's lowliness in the narrative, should not also have copied his plainness and perspicuity in the dramatic parts : since in his speeches (where clearness above all is necessary) there is frequently such transposition and forced construction, that the very sense is not to be discovered without a second or third reading : and in this certainly he ought to be no example.

To preserve the true character of Homer's style in the present translation, great pains have been taken to be

easy and natural. The chief merit I can pretend to, is, not to have been carried into a more plausible and figurative manner of writing, which would better have pleased all readers, but the judicious ones. My errors had been fewer, had each of those gentlemen who joined with me shown as much of the severity of a friend to me, as I did to them, in a strict animadversion and correction. What assistance I received from them, was made known in general to the public in the original proposals for this work, and the particulars are specified at the conclusion of it; to which I must add (to be punctually just) some part of the tenth and fifteenth books. The reader will now be too good a judge, how much the greater part of it, and consequently of its faults, is chargeable upon me alone. But this I can with integrity affirm, that I have bestowed as much time and pains upon the whole, as were consistent with the indispensable duties and cares of life, and with that wretched state of health which God has been pleased to make my portion. At the least, it is a pleasure to me to reflect, that I have introduced into our language this other work of the greatest and most antient of poets, with some dignity; and I hope, with as little disadvantage as the *Iliad*. And if, after the unmerited success of that translation, any one will wonder why I would enterprize the *Odyssey*; I think it sufficient to say, that Homer himself did the same, or the world would never have seen it.

I designed to have ended this postscript here; but since I am now taking my leave of Homer, and of all controversy relating to him, I beg leave to be indulged if I make use of this last opportunity, to say a very few words about some reflections which the late Madam Dacier bestowed on the first part of my preface to the *Iliad*, and which she published at the end of her translation of that poem *.

To write gravely an answer to them would be too much for the reflections; and to say nothing concerning them, would be too little for the author. It is ow-

* Second edition, à Paris, 1719.

ing to the industry of that learned lady, that our polite neighbours are become acquainted with many of Homer's beauties, which were hidden from them before in Greek and in Eustathius. She challenges in this account a particular regard from all the admirers of that great poet, and I hope that I shall be thought, as I mean, to pay some part of this debt to her memory in what I am now writing.

Had these reflections fallen from the pen of an ordinary critic, I should not have apprehended their effect, and should therefore have been silent concerning them: but since they are Madam Dacier's, I imagine that they must be of weight; and in a case where I think her reasoning very bad, I respect her authority.

I have fought under Madam Dacier's banner, and have waged war in defence of the divine Homer against all the heretics of the age. And yet it is Madam Dacier who accuses me, and who accuses me of nothing less than betraying our common cause. She affirms that the most declared enemies of this author have never said any thing against him more injurious or more unjust than I. What must the world think of me, after such a judgment passed by so great a critic; the world, who decides so often, and who examines so seldom; the world, who even in matters of literature is almost always the slave of authority? Who will suspect that so much learning should mistake, that so much accuracy should be misled, or that so much candour should be biassed?

All this however has happened, and Madam Dacier's criticisms on my preface flow from the very same error, from which so many false criticisms of her countrymen upon Homer have flowed, and which she has so justly and so severely reprov'd; I mean the error of depending on injurious and unskilful translations.

An indifferent translation may be of some use, and a good one will be of a great deal. But I think that no translation ought to be the ground of criticism, because no man ought to be condemned upon another man's explanation of his meaning: could Homer have had the honour of explaining his, before that august tribunal where Monsieur de la Motte presides, I make no doubt

but he had escaped many of those severe animadversions with which some French authors have loaded him, and from which even Madam Dacier's translation of the Iliad could not preserve him.

How unhappy was it for me, that the knowledge of our island-tongue was as necessary to Madam Dacier in my case, as the knowledge of Greek was to Monsieur de la Motte in that of our great author; or to any of those whom she styles "blind censurers," and blames for condemning what they did not understand.

I may say with modesty, that she knew less of my true sense from that faulty translation of part of my preface, than those blind censurers might have known of Homer's even from the translation of la Valterie, which proceeded her own.

It pleased me however to find, that her objections were not levelled at the general doctrine, or at any essentials of my preface, but only at a few particular expressions. She proposed little more than (to use her own phrase) to "combat two or three families;" and I hope that to combat a simile is no more than to fight with a shadow, since a simile is no better than the shadow of an argument.

She lays much weight where I laid but little, and examines with more scrupulosity than I writ, or than perhaps the matter requires.

These unlucky families taken by themselves may perhaps render my meaning equivocal to an ignorant translator; or there may have fallen from my pen some expressions, which, taken by themselves likewise, may to the same person have the same effect. But if the translator had been master of our tongue, the general tenour of my argument, that which precedes and that which follows the passages objected to, would have sufficiently determined him as to the precise meaning of them: and if Madam Dacier had taken up her pen a little more leisurely, or had employed it with more temper, she would not have answered paraphrases of her own, which even the translation will not justify, and which say, more than once, the very contrary to what I have said in the passages themselves.

If any person has curiosity enough to read the whole paragraphs in my preface, or some mangled parts of which these reflections are made, he will easily discern that I am as orthodox as Madam Dacier herself in those very articles on which she treats me like an heretic : he will easily see that all the difference between us consists in this, that I offer opinions, and she delivers doctrines ; that my imagination represents Homer as the greatest of human poets, whereas in hers he was exalted above humanity ; infallibility and impeccability were two of his attributes. There was therefore no need of defending Homer against me, who, (if I mistake not) had carried my admiration of him, as far as it can be carried, without giving a real occasion of writing in his defence.

After answering my harmless families, she proceeds to a matter which does not regard so much the honour of Homer, as that of the times he lived in ; and here I must confess she does not wholly mistake my meaning, but I think she mistakes the state of the question. She had said, the manners of those times were so much the better, the less they were like ours. I thought this required a little qualification. I confess that in my opinion the world was mended in some points, such as the custom of putting whole nations to the sword, condemning kings and their families to perpetual slavery, and a few others. Madam Dacier judges otherwise in this ; but as to the rest, particularly in preferring the simplicity of the antient world to the luxury of ours, which is the main point contended for, she owns we agree. This I thought was well, but I am so unfortunate that this too is taken amiss, and called adopting or (if you will) stealing her sentiment. The truth is she might have said "her words," for I used them on purpose, being then professedly citing from her : though I might have done the same without intending that compliment, for they are also to be found in Eustathius, and the sentiment I believe is that of all mankind. I cannot really tell what to say to this whole remark, only that in the first part of it, Madam Dacier is displeased that I do not agree with her, and in the last that I do : but this

is a temper which every polite man should over-look in a lady.

To punish my ingratitude, she resolves to expose my blunders, and selects two which I suppose are the most flagrant, out of the many for which she could have chastised me. It happens that the first of these is in part the translator's, and in part her own, without any share of mine : she quotes the end of a sentence, and he puts in French what I never wrote in English : " Homer (I
" said) opened a new and boundless walk for his ima-
" gination, and created a world for himself in the in-
" vention of fable ;" which he translates, " Homere
" crea pour son usage un monde mouvant, en inventant
" la fable."

Madam Dacier justly wonders at this nonsense in me ; and I, in the translator. As to what I meant by Homer's invention of fable, it is afterwards particularly distinguished from that extensive sense in which she took it, by these words. " If Homer was not the first, who
" introduced the deities (as Herodotus imagines) into
" the religion of Greece, he seems the first who brought
" them into a system of machinery for poetry."

The other blunder she accuses me of is, the mistaking a passage in Aristotle, and she is pleased to send me back to this philosopher's treatise of poetry, and to her preface on the *Odyssy* for my better instruction. Now though I am saucy enough to think that one may sometimes differ from Aristotle without blundering, and though I am sure one may sometimes fall into an error by following him servilely ; yet I own, that to quote any author for what he never said is a blunder ; (but by the way, to correct an author for what he never said, is somewhat worse than a blunder.) My words were these.
" As there is a greater variety of characters in the *Iliad*
" than in any other poem, so there is of speeches. Every
" thing in it has manners, as Aristotle expresses it ; that
" is, every thing is acted or spoken : very little passes
" in narration." She justly says, that " Every thing
" which is acted or spoken, has not necessarily manners
" merely because it is acted or spoken." Agreed : but I would ask the question, whether any thing can have

manners which is neither acted nor spoken? If not, then the whole Iliad being almost spent in speech and action, almost every thing in it has manners, since Homer has been proved before in a long paragraph of the preface, to have excelled in drawing characters and painting manners, and indeed his whole poem is one continued occasion of shewing this bright part of his talent.

To speak fairly, it is impossible she could read even the translation, and take my sense so wrong as she represents it; but I was first translated ignorantly, and then read partially. My expression indeed was not quite exact; it should have been, "Every thing has manners" "as Aristotle calls them." But such a fault methinks might have been spared, since if one was to look with that disposition she discovers towards me, even on her own excellent writings, one might find some mistakes which no context can redress; as where she makes Eustathius call Cratisthenes the Phliasian, Callisthenes the physician *. What a triumph might some slips of this sort have afforded to Homer's, hers, and my enemies, from which she was only screened by their happy ignorance? How unlucky had it been, when she insulted Mr. de la Motte for omitting a material passage in the † speech of Helen to Hector, Iliad vi. if some champion for the moderns had by chance understood so much Greek, as to whisper him, that there was no such passage in Homer?

Our concern, zeal, and even jealousy, for our great author's honour were mutual, our endeavours to advance it were equal, and I have as often trembled for it in her hands, as she could in mine. It was one of the many reasons I had to wish the longer life of this lady, that I must certainly have regained her good opinion, in spite of all misrepresenting translators whatever. I could not have expected it on any other terms than being approved as great, if not as passionate, an admirer of Homer as herself. For that was the first condition of her favour and friendship; otherwise not one's taste

* Dacier remarques sur le 4me livre de l'Odyss. p. 467.

† De la corruption du gout.

alone, but one's morality had been corrupted, nor would any man's religion have been unsuspected, who did not implicitly believe in an author whose doctrine is so conformable to holy scripture. However, as different people have different ways of expressing their belief, some purely by public and general acts of worship, others by a reverend sort of reasoning and enquiry about the grounds of it; it is the same in admiration, some prove it by exclamations, others by respect. I have observed that the loudest huzzas given to a great man in a triumph, proceed not from his friends, but the rabble; and as I have fancied it the same with the rabble of critics, a desire to be distinguished from them has turned me to the more moderate, and, I hope, more rational method. Though I am a poet, I would not be an enthusiast; and though I am an Englishman, I would not be furiously of a party. I am far from thinking myself that genius, upon whom, at the end of these remarks, Madam Dacier congratulates my country: one capable of, "correcting Homer, and consequently of
" reforming mankind, and amending this constitu-
" tion." It was not to Great Britain this ought to have been applied, since our nation has one happiness for which she might have preferred it to her own, that as much as we abound in other miserable misguided sects, we have at least none of the blasphemers of Homer. We steadfastly and unanimously believe, both his poem, and our constitution, to be the best that ever human wit invented: that the one is not more incapable of amendment than the other; and (old as they both are) we despise any French or Englishman whatever, who shall presume to retrench, to innovate, or to make the least alteration in either. Far therefore from the genius for which Madam Dacier mistook me, my whole desire is but to preserve the humble character of a faithful translator, and a quiet subject.

I N D E X.

The first number marks the book, the second the verse.

A N T I Q U I T Y.

A.

[Customs and opinions of antiquity.]

TO join vocal with instrumental music, i. 199. iv. 23. viii. 40, 307.

Weaving, the employment of queens and the greatest princesses, i. 455. as also spinning, iv. 178.

Dogs kept as instances of state by kings, ii. 14. xx. 182.

Washing before meat, i. 183. Making libations on all solemn occasions, ii. 470, and note. iii. 57, 506, &c.

Honours paid to old age, iii. 66.

Piracy esteemed honourable, iii. 86. See the note.

The art of beating gold into leaves, iii. 555.

Bathing of strangers, iii. 593. Performed by virgins of the best quality, *ibid.* and the note. iv. 58.

Arrows poisoned, but not used in war, i. 341, and the note.

The art of inlaying with ivory, &c. iv. 87. xxi. 10.

Sports of the antients; chess, i. 141. Throwing the javelin, and quoits, iv. 848. xvii. 193. Leaping, racing, wrestling and boxing, viii. 125. Shooting through the rings, xix. 671.

Ploughing with mules, iv. 860. With oxen, viii. 130.

Skill in navigation, v. 345.

The belief of the antients in amulets or charms, v. 440, and the note.

Princesses accustomed to wash their own robes, vi. 35, 105. By treading them in cisterns. See note, v. 101. The sport of the ball, vi. 113. Embroidery, vii. 125. xix. 265. Women employed to turn the mill, vii. 133. xx. 133.

They believed that the gods appeared in the form of men, vi. 175. vii. 265. In light, xix. 50. They believed in demons, v. 509. That there were good and bad. See note, *ibid.* That they inflicted diseases, *ibid.* Authors of calamities, x. 71. xi. 76. xii. 352. xxiv. 357.

Their opinions of ghosts, xi. 48, 180, 248, 261. That the gods had commerce with women, xi. 290. That infernal furies avenged violence offered to parents, ii. 157. xi. 340.

The father's patrimony divided by lot amongst all the children, xiv. 239.

I N D E X.

The mother's dowry refunded by the son, if sent home upon the death of the husband, ii. 153.
 Adultery atoned by a pecuniary mulct, viii. 358. The daughter's dower in such cases restored by the father. Note *ibid*.
 Selling of slaves, xiv. 327.
 Suretyship practised in the days of Homer, viii. 386. Banishment the punishment of murder, xxiii. 120. See *Theoclymenus*, xv. 301. That the gods, visible or invisible at pleasure, appear in the form of strangers, xvii. 578. xvi. 175. That the person of kings was inviolable, xvi. 417. Their belief in prodigies, xx. 415. Their use of sulphur in purifying polluted places, xxii. 527. xxiii. 51. The nuptial chamber seen only by the nearest relations, xxiii. 241. Altars erected by public roads for the devotion of travellers, xvii. 244. That sneezing was ominous, xvii. 625. They believed that charms and music could staunch blood, xix. 536. Children nursed with wine, milk, and honey, xx. 83. Sponges used to cleanse the tables, xx. 189. See the note, *ibid*. 22, 488. Altars built in groves, xx. 342.

A U G U R Y and O M E N S.

Omen of two eagles, ii. 171. From a casual voice, i. 367. ii. 44, 245. xx. 123. See the notes. From an eagle trussing a fowl, xv. 179. From an hawk tearing a dove, xx. 302. xv. 566. From an eagle destroying a flock of geese, xix. 628. From thunder in a clear sky, xx. 128. xxi. 453.

Antinous, i. 489. His character, note, v. 491. Replies to *Telemachus*, ii. 95, 341. Lays an ambush to intercept *Telemachus*, iv. 886, &c. His speech, xvi. 378. Slain by *Ulysses*, xxii. 12.

Antiphus, son of *Ægyptius*, slain by *Cyclops*, ii. 23.

Amphialus, victor in the leap, viii. 135.

Antilochus, son of *Nestor*, slain before *Troy*, iii. 135. By *Memnon*, iv. 256. His bones buried in the urn of *Achilles*, xxiv. 97. See the note.

Agamemnon returns from *Troy*, iii. 234. Is murdered, 386. iv. 700. Relates his own story, xi. 499. His conference in hell with the ghost of *Amphimedon*, xxiv. 127.

Asphalion, attendant on *Menelaus*, iv. 297.

Anticlus, iv. 387.

Ajax Oileus slain for his presumption by *Neptune*, iv. 677. *Ajax Telamon*, his story, xi. 665.

Asteris, a small island, iv. 1104.

Alcinous, king of *Phæacia*, vi. 18. His palace, vii. 107. Calls a council, viii. 3. Gives presents to *Ulysses*, viii. 425. Sends him to his country, xiii. 80.

Arete, wife of *Alcinous*, vii. 70. Her excellent character, 92.

Arethusa, xiii. 470.

Athens described, vii. 103.

I N D E X.

- Antiphates**, king of the Læstrigons, x. 120.
Artacia, a stream, x. 121.
Acheron, an infernal river, x. 609.
Anticlea, mother of Ulysses, xi. 187. Dies through sorrow for Ulysses, 240.
Amithaon, son of Crethus, xi. 315.
Alcmena, mother of Hercules, xi. 325.
Amphithea, xix. 488.
Amphion, xi. 319.
Ariadne, her history, xi. 398.
Achilles, his conference in hell with Ulysses, xi. 576. With the ghost of Agamemnon, xxiv. 35. His funeral described, xxiv. 60.
Argo, a ship so named, xii. 83.
Argus, the dog of Ulysses, xvii. 345.
Amphiaraus, xv. 268.
Amphinomus, xvi. 367. His character, 410. His speech, 416. Slain by Telemachus, xxii. 110.
Autolychus, grandfather to Ulysses, xix. 467.
Agelaus, a suitor, xx. 388. Threatens Mentor, xxii. 235, 274. Slain, xxii. 364.
Amphimedon, slain by Telemachus, xxii. 314. His shade relates the death of the suitors to Agamemnon in hell, xxiv. 145.

Æ.

- Ægythus** corrupts Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, iii. 310, 326. Slain by Orestes, 242, 391. i. 40. Reigns seven years in Mycenæ, iii. 388. iv. 692. xi. 483.
Ægyptius, faithful to Ulysses, his speech at the opening of the assembly of Ithacans, ii. 33.
Ægyptus, or the Nile so called antiently, iii. 383. xvii. 510.
Ægypt, famous for simples, iv. 317. And pharmacy, 321.
Ægæ, sacred to Neptune, v. 487.
Æolia, the island of Æolus, x. 1.
Æolus, king of the winds, x. 20. Binds them in a bag, and delivers them to Ulysses, *ibid*.
Æson, son of Cretheus, xi. 314.
Æthon, xix. 214.

C.

- Calypso** out of love detains Ulysses, v. 23. Her speech to Mercury, v. 149. To Ulysses, 257.
Clytoneus, victor in the race, viii. 131.
Cyprus, sacred to Venus, viii. 395.
Cicons, repulse Ulysses, ix. 51.
Cyclops, the fertility of the country, ix. 123. Their manners, 127. Polypheme described, ix. 217. His cave, 252. Destroys the companions of Ulysses, ix. 342.
Circe, an enchantress, x. 158. Her palace, 240. Transforms the companions of Ulysses into beasts, 277. Takes Ulysses to her

I N D E X.

- bed, 412. She sends him to the shades below, x. 576. Instructs him in his future voyages, xii. 51.
- Cocytus, a river in hell, x. 610.
- Cimmerians, a land of darkness, xi. 16.
- Cretheus, husband of Tyro, xi. 313.
- Chloris, xi. 341.
- Chromius, son of Neleus, xi. 349.
- Castor, xi. 369. His story, 370.
- Clemene, xi. 405.
- Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, murders her husband, xi. 506.
- Cassandra, murdered, xi. 526.
- Cetæans, a people of Myfia, xi. 636.
- Charybdis, xii. 129.
- Crete, xiii. 307. xiv. 271. Contains ninety cities, xix. 196.
- Cretans, remarkable liars, xiv. 411. See the note.
- Cydonians, famed for archery, xix. 200.
- Cnossus, capital of Crete, xix. 204.
- Ctesippus, a Samian, xx. 353. Slain by Philætiis, xxii. 316.

D.

D E S C R I P T I O N S.

- Of Minerva descending to Ithaca, i. 124. Of sailing, ii. 460. Of a sacrifice, iii. 534. Of the palace of Menelaus, iv. 85. Of Nepenthe, iv. 301. Of the various shapes of Proteus, iv. 563, 615. Of Elysium, iv. 765. Of the descent of Mercury, v. 56. Of the isle and bower of Calypso, v. 72. Of a storm, v. 375. Of Ulysses fainting, v. 580. Of heaven, vi. 49. The grove of Pallas, vi. 349. Of the palace of Alcinous, vii. 107. Of his gardens, 142. Of the land of Lotos, ix. 94. Of a man in a fright, x. 286, 383. Of an infernal sacrifice, x. 624. xi. 45. Of a stone heaved against a mountain, xi. 736. Of its rushing down, 738. Of the Sirens, xii. 51. Of the erratic rocks, xii. 71. Of Scylla, xii. 107. Of Charybdis, xii. 129. Of a storm, xii. 369, 475. Of old age, xiii. 455, 497. Of the landscape about Ithaca, xvii. 230. Of a beggar, xvii. 410. Of a charitable man, xvii. 501. xix. 94. Of a strong person, xviii. 76, 84. Of a single combat, xviii. 102. Of insolent men in power, xviii. 157. Of a drunken person, xviii. 281. Of the evening star, xviii. 352. Of hunting the boar, xix. 500. Of tuning a lyre, xxi. 440. Of the twanging of the string, xxi. 448. Of bending a bow, xxi. *ibid.* Of the flight of an arrow, xxi. 461. Of Ulysses beginning a fight, xxii. 1. Of hanging, xxii. 503. Of the nuptial apartment of Ulysses, xxiii. 185. Of the funeral of Achilles, xxiv. 60. Of the victory of Ulysses, xxiv. 609.

- Diocleus, prince of Pheræ, iii. 619. xv. 210.
- Deiphobus, iv. 375. viii. 565.
- Dolius, master of the fruit-groves to Ulysses, iv. 972.

I N D E X.

Demodocus, a poet, viii. 40. Is blind, 59. His song to the Phæ-
 acians, 69. His song of Mars and Venus, 307.
 Dancing described, viii. 303.
 Dance with the ball, viii. 407.
 Dodona, famous for the oracles of Jupiter, xiv. 364. xix. 340.
 Dmetor, king of Cyprus, xvii. 525.
 Dolius assists Ulysses, xxiv. 575.
 Dorians settled in Crete, xix. 202.
 Deucalion, xix. 208.
 Demoptolemus heads the suitors, xxii. 268. Slain, 293.
 Demastorides slain, xxii. 325.

E.

Ephyre, i. 337. noted for poisons, ii. 370.
 Elis, famed for a breed of horses, iv. 858. xxi. 374.
 Eurymachus, his speech, i. 509. His character, note, v. 491.
 lib. i. His speech, ii. 207. xvi. 452. Slain by Ulysses, xxii. 96.
 Euryclea, a sage matron, nurse to Ulysses, and attendant on Tele-
 machus, i. 541. Her fondness to Telemachus, ii. 406. Her
 speech to Penelope, iv. 980. Knows Ulysses, xix. 547. Tells
 Penelope of Ulysses's return, xxiii. 5.
 Eidothea, a sea nymph, daughter of Proteus, iv. 494. She in-
 structs Menelaus to surprise Proteus, iv. 550.
 Elysium, iv. 765.
 Eumelus, king of Thessaly, iv. 1050.
 Eurymedusa, nurse to Nausicaa, vii. 10.
 Echeneus, an aged counsellor to Alcinous, vii. 209. xi. 428.
 Elatreus, victor in the game of the quoit, viii. 137.
 Euryalus, victor in wrestling, viii. 134. Affronts Ulysses, viii.
 175. Repairs the wrong, 441.
 Eurytus, his skill in archery, viii. 256. Slain by Apollo, *ibid.*
 Eurylochus, x. 235. His terror described, 287, 313. His speech,
 509. xii. 333, 403.
 Elpenor, x. 659. Breaks his neck through drunkenness, 666.
 Meets Ulysses at the entrance of hell, xi. 65. His obsequies,
 xii. 11.
 Enipeus, a river, xi. 283.
 Ephialtes, a giant, his story, xi. 377.
 Eryphyle betrays her husband for gold, xi. 406.
 Eurypylus slain by the son of Achilles, xi. 635.
 Erratic rocks, xii. 71.
 Eumæus, master of the swine to Ulysses, xiv. 5. His lodge, 9.
 His piety and hospitality, 65. Informs Ulysses of the riots of
 the suitors, xiv. 115. Of the affairs of his family, xv. 375. Of
 his own history, xv. 438. The son of a king, xv. 455. Assists
 Ulysses in fight, xxii. 178, 296.
 Etroneus, xv. 156.
 Echetus, a savage tyrant, xviii. 96, 142. xxi. 329.
 Eurytion, the Centaur, xx. 317.

I N D E X.

Euryades slain by Telemachus, xxii. 294.
 Elatus slain by Eumæus, xxii. 296.
 Eurydamus slain by Ulysses, xxii. 312.
 Eupithes raises the Ithacans against Ulysses, xxiv. 484.

G.

Greeks sail from Troy to Tenedos, iii. 191. To Lesbos, 203. To Eubæa, 212. To Gereftus, 216. To Sunium, by Athens, 352. To the Malæan cape, 366. To Crete, 371. To Cydon, and Gortyna, *ibid.* To the Phæstian coast, 380. To the Nile, 383. See note, *ibid.*
 Gods subordinate, v. 130. vi. 391. Know one another, v. 100. Appear in the form of strangers, xvii. 576. In light, xix. 52.
 Ghosts, their appearance, xi. 47. Ignorant of what passes in the world, xi. 565.
 Gorgon, xi. 785.
 Grotto of the Nereids, xiii. 124.

H.

Halitherfes, an augur, his speech, ii. 189.
 Hercules, his shade in hell, xi. 741. Slays Iphitus, xxi. 29.
 Hermione, daughter of Helen, married to Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, iv. 7.
 Helen, her majestic air, iv. 157. Her speech, 185. Her skill in drugs, 315. She relates an adventure of Ulysses, 335. Her skill in embroidery, xv. 139. Interprets an omen, xv. 194.
 Happiness of a private life, i. 279. Of kingly power, i. 495. Of a married life, vi. 217.
 Herds of Apollo, xii. 160, 315.

J.

Jupiter, i. 41. Convenes the gods. His speech, 35. The conference between him and Neptune, xiii. 144. Commands the re-establishment of Ulysses, xxiv. 548.
 Ithaca, the description of it, rough and mountainous, iv. 821. ix. 21. xiii. 285. xiv. 7. xix. 127.
 Idomeneus, xiii. 314. xiv. 271.
 Iphthima, sister to Penelope, iv. 1048.
 Iasion, loved by Ceres, v. 161.
 Ismarus, ix. 42.
 Jocasta, queen of Thebes, xi. 330. Hangs herself, *ibid.*
 Iphiclus, a Philacian, xi. 354.
 Iphimedia, mother of two giants, xi. 375.
 Irus, a beggar, xviii. 4. Insults Ulysses, xviii. 19. Chastised by Ulysses, xviii. 114.
 Iomalius, excellent in mechanics, xix. 69.
 Iphitus, xxi. 18, 25. Slain by Hercules, xxi. 30.

I N D E X.

L.

- Leocritus**, one of the suitors, his speech, ii. 275. Slain by Ulysses, xxii. 326.
Laerceus, iii. 539. Gilds the horns of the bullock before the sacrifice, iii. 555.
Libya, the description of it, iv. 104. Ewes bear three lambs each year, *ibid.* See the notes.
Leucothea, a sea nymph, preserves Ulysses, v. 425.
Laodamus, son of Alcinous, viii. 122. Victor at the gauntlet, 141.
Lotophagi, ix. 107.
Lachæa, an island, the description of it, ix. 135.
Lamos, seat of the Læstrigons, x. 92.
Læstrigons, a race of giants, slay the friends of Ulysses, x. 131.
Laertes, his solitary life, xi. 226. xv. 375. xvi. 148. The interview between him and Ulysses, xxiv. 261. Arms and kills Eupithes, xxiv. 576, 599.
Leda, xi. 365.
Leiodes, his trial of the bow, xxi. 152. Slain, xxii. 347.
Leucadian rock, xxiv. 17.

M.

M O R A L I T Y.

- God not the author of man's sin, i. 41. Free-will asserted, *ibid.*
 God favours the just, i. 86. Is omnipotent, iii. 285. Duty to parents recommended, i. 387. ii. 148.
 Folly and vice inseparable, ii. 320.
 Piety to strangers, iv. 37.
 The anger of heaven not easily appeased, iii. 178.
 Man dependent upon God, iii. 62. Angry when man offends, iv. 477.
 We ought to rely on heaven, iv. 1079.
 Piety to persons in distress, vi. 235, 245. xiv. 64.
 Virgin modesty commended, vi. 341.
 Friendship held sacred, viii. 240. Friend equal to a brother, 635.
 Friendship continues after death, xi. 575.
 The gods appeased by prayer, viii. 623.
 Lying detestable, iii. 26. xi. 450. xiv. 427.
 Sacrilege punished with death, xii. 485.
 The power of the gods irresistible, xvi. 280.

- Minerva**, i. 55. Pleads with Jupiter for the return of Ulysses. Her speech to Telemachus, ii. 305. To Jupiter, v. 12. Restrains a storm, v. 490. Appears to Ulysses, xiii. 267. To Telemachus, xv. 1. Warns Telemachus of the suitors ambush, 33. Appears to Ulysses, xvi. 168. xx. 40. Assists Ulysses,

I N D E X.

- xxii. 222, 330. Intercedes with Jupiter for the re-establishment of Ulysses, xxiv. 541.
- Mentes, king of Taphos, i. 136. His speech to Telemachus, i. 227.
- Mentor, friend of Ulysses and Telemachus, ii. 253. Attends him to Pyle, iii. 27. His prayer, iii. 69. Assists in the destruction of the suitors, xxii. 223.
- Mercury sent to Calypso, v. 38. His pleasantries, viii. 377. Appears to Ulysses, x. 330. Patron of industry and arts, xv. 336. Of faith and stratagem, xix. 468. Conducts the souls of the suitors to hell, xxiv. 1.
- Maron, priest of Apollo, ix. 230.
- Moly, powerful against enchantment, x. 365.
- Megara, wife of Hercules, xi. 327.
- Mæra, xi. 405.
- Minos, xix. 205. An infernal judge, xi. 698.
- Melampus, a prophet, xi. 357. xv. 253.
- Melanthius outrages Ulysses, xvii. 247. xx. 225. Assists the suitors, xxii. 153. His death, xxii. 509.
- Melantho, maid to Penelope, xviii. 367. xix. 78.
- Mulius, xviii. 468.
- Malca, iii. 366. xix. 217.
- Mars surprised by Vulcan, viii. 339.
- Medon, herald to the suitors, iv. 902. Informs Penelope of the suitors' designs, xvi. 426. His character, xvii. 196. See the note. Spared by Ulysses, xxii. 415. Persuades the Ithacans to peace, xxiv. 508.
- Menelaus, his voyages, iii. 351, 384. Receives Telemachus hospitably, iv. 37. His further voyages, 97. Continues his speech, 119, 225. He relates his own adventures, iv. 473. Promised Elysium without dying, 765. Dismisses Telemachus, xv. 168.

N.

- Neptune, why incensed against Ulysses, i. 8. Raises a storm, v. 375. Shipwrecks Ulysses, v. 403.
- Neion, i. 239.
- Nestor, iii. 50. His speech, 82, 125. His hospitality, 443.
- Nepenthe, iv. 302. Its qualities, *ibid.*
- Noemon lends Telemachus a bark, i. 434. Discovers it to the suitors, iv. 853.
- Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinous, vi. 22. Relieves Ulysses, vi. 245.
- Neleus, father of Nestor, xi. 343.
- Neritus, a mountain of Ithaca, xiii. 399.

O.

- Orestes, son of Agamemnon, iii. 245. xi. 559.
- Orion, beloved by Aurora, v. 155.

I N D E X.

Orion, a giant, xi. 380, 703.

Ogygia, vii. 328.

Orator described, viii. 189.

Otus, a giant, his story, xi. 377.

Orsilochus, xiii. 312. xxi. 19.

Ortygia, xv. 438.

Omens. See A. Customs of Antiquity.

P.

Phemius, a poet, i. 197. His song to the suitors, i. 421. Spared by Ulysses, xxii. 415. Persuades the Ithacans to peace, xxiv. 506.

Penelope, her character, i. 321. ii. 99. Her warm speech to Medon, iv. 96. To the suitors, xvi. 44. Her transport at the return of Telemachus, xvii. 52. Her wise conduct, xviii. 195. Her speech, xviii. 200, &c. 255, 293. The interview between her and Ulysses, xxiii. 93, 165. She owns him, xxiii. 211.

Pisistratus, son of Nestor, iii. 47. Attends Telemachus to Sparta, 611. His speech to Menelaus, iv. 203, 259. Returns from Sparta, xv. 160.

Philoctetes's skill in archery, iii. 231. viii. 252.

Phrontes, pilot to Menelaus, dies suddenly, iii. 354.

Polycaste, daughter of Nestor, bathes Telemachus, iii. 593.

Peon, god of pharmacy, iv. 321.

Philomelides conquered by Ulysses, iv. 463.

Pharos, an island in the mouth of Nile, iv. 479.

Proteus, iv. 563.

Phocæ, the flocks of Proteus, iv. 543.

Phantom appears to Penelope, iv. 1047.

Polypus, a fish, v. 550.

Phæacia, (now Corfu) vi. 5. The people ignorant and effeminate, vi. 11. Their manners, 320. viii. 289. Their chief city described, vi. 311. vii. 55. The common islanders rude, vi. 327. vii. 21, 41. The better people given to hospitality. See note on ver. 325. lib. vi.

Paphos, sacred to Venus, viii. 396.

Poetry, the honours due to it, viii. 521. xvii. 466. The gift of heaven, *ibid.* Ascribed to inspiration, viii. 531. See note, xxii. 383.

Phædon, king of Thesprotia, xix. 329.

Polites, companion of Ulysses, x. 258.

Phlegethon, a burning river in hell, x. 608.

Pelas, king of Iolcos, xi. 311.

Pheres, son of Cretheus, xi. 314.

Periclimenus, xi. 348. His wonderful qualities, note, *ibid.*

Pollux, his story, xi. 367.

Phædra, xi. 395.

Procris, xi. 395.

I N D E X.

- Peleus, father of Achilles, xi. 605.
 Pero, a great beauty, xi. 351. xv. 259.
 Phorcys, the bay of it described, xiii. 117, 393.
 Phœnicians great sailors, xiii. 316. Noted for falsehood, xiv. 319.
 Skill in astronomy, xv. 440. See the note.
 Polyphides, a prophet, xv. 274.
 Peiræus, xv. 581.
 Parnassus, xix. 463, 504.
 Pandarus, xx. 78.
 Philætius, a faithful servant to Ulysses, xx. 234. His speech to
 Ulysses, xx. 249. xxi. 205. Assists him in the fight, and kills
 Ctesippus, xxii. 316.

R.

- Reithrus, i. 238.
 Rhadamanthus, iv. 766.
 Rhexenor dies suddenly, vii. 81.

S.

S I M I L I T U D E S.

From things animate.

- From a lion's tearing young fawns, iv. 450. xvii. 140. From a
 shepherd tending his flocks, iv. 559. From a fatted ox killed in
 the stall, iv. 719. From a lioness defending her whelps, 1041.
 From water-fowl, v. 64. From a sea-mew, v. 428. From
 children rejoicing for the recovery of a father, v. 506. From
 a fish called a polypus, v. 550. From Diana dancing with her
 nymphs, vii. 116. From a lion rushing from a wood to seize
 his prey, vi. 153. From a matron seeing an husband dying,
 viii. 571. From a shipwright boring with a wimble, ix. 457.
 From an armourer tempering iron in water, 465. From calves
 frisking round their dams, x. 485. From a fisher, xii. 300.
 From a bat clinging to a beam, xii. 513. From a ploughman
 wearied with labour, xiii. 39. From the motion of horses in a
 race, xiii. 98. From the dropping down of a crow, xiv. 341.
 From a father receiving an only son after a long absence, xvi.
 17. From an eagle or vulture lamenting for her young, xvi.
 238. From the music of poetry, xvii. 609. From the night-
 ingale, xix. 605. From a mastiff, xx. 20. From a man in
 hunger, xx. 32. From the roaring of a bull, xxi. 51. From a
 lyrist tuning his harp, xxi. 440. From the voice of a swallow,
 xxi. 449. From the breeze fly, xxii. 335. From vultures seiz-
 ing their prey, xxii. 337. From fishing, xxii. 425. From a
 lion standing over his prey, xxii. 440. From birds caught in a
 snare, xxii. 505. From a sailor escaping from a wreck, xxiii.
 249. From the screaming of bats, xxiv. 9.

I N D E X.

Similitudes from things inanimate.

From an heap of thorns driven by the wind, v. 417. From sheaves of corn tost by a whirlwind, 470. From a peasant preserving fire in embers, v. 630. From pouring silver over gold, vi. 275. From the motion of the leaves of a poplar, vii. 135. From snaws dissolving, xix. 238.

Suitors, their luxury and riot, i. 138, 189, 291. iv. 429. Throughout the whole *Odyssæy*.

Sparta seated in a vale, iv. 2. Famed for dancing, xv. 2.

Syria, an island, xv. 438. Fruitful and healthful, *ibid*.

Sidon, famous for works in metals, iv. 834. xv. 130.

Styx, an infernal river, by which the gods swear, v. 239.

Sentences, their use in poetry, vii. Note on v. 379.

Ships of Alcinous instinct with thought, viii. 604. Transformed into a rock, xiii. 188.

Salmonæus, xi. 281.

Sisyphus, his punishment in hell, xi. 734.

Sirens described, xii. 51, 219.

Scylla, a dreadful rock, xii. 87, 280.

Sicily, why so called, xx. 456. See the note.

T.

Telemachus, i. 148. His hospitality, his speech to Mentes, i. 203. Convenes a council, ii. 10. His speech, ii. 47, 147. ii. 237. His prayer to Minerva, 296. Lands in Pyle, iii. 5. His speech to Nestor, 90. To Menelaus, iv. 425. Sets sail for Ithaca, xv. 310. Lands, xv. 535. Confers with Eumæus, xvi. 57. With Penelope, xvii. 56. With Ulysses, xvi. 77. Knows him, 234. His trial of the bow, xxi. 130. Kills Amphinomus, xxii. 105.

Temese, i. 410. Famous for metals. See the note.

Thone, king of *Ægypt*, iv. 316.

Thyestes, iv. 690.

Thrace, sacred to Mars, viii. 394.

Troy, the taking of it, viii. 551.

Telemus, a prophet, ix. 595.

Tiresias, x. 582. xi. 112. Tells Ulysses his fate, 126.

Tyro, her history, xi. 281.

Tityus, his punishment in hell, xi. 709.

Tantalus, his punishment, xi. 719.

Taphians practise piracy, xv. 469.

Theoclymenus, an augur, xv. 278. Explains an omen to Telemachus, xv. 271. To Penelope, xvii. 175. Interprets a prodigy, xx. 421.

Thesprotians, xvi. 19, 66, 309, 330.

I N D E X.

U.

Ulysses, his character, ii. 79. Detained by Calypso, iv. 753. His adventure in Troy, 335. Mourns for his country, v. 105, 193. His speech to Calypso, v. 273. He builds a raft, v. 311. Sets sail, iv. 345. Is shipwrecked, 403. Thrown upon an unknown shore, 580. Passes the night in a wood, 613. His address to Nausicaa, vi. 175. He is relived by her, 227. Entertained by Alcinous, vii. 250. His speech before the Phæacians, viii. 183. Out-throws all the Phæacians, 210. His challenge to the Phæacians, 230. Relates his adventures to the Phæacians, ix. 21. The story of the Cicones, ix. 41. Of the Lotophagi, 95. Of Cyclops, 217. Ulysses escapes, 549. Received by Æolus, x. 1. Sails to the Læstrigons, x. 91. To Circe, 157. Descends to hell, xi. 27. Confers with his mother Anticlea, 186. With Agamemnon, &c. 485. Sets sail towards his country, xiii. 90. Lands, xiii. 138. Goes to Eumæus in disguise of a beggar, xiv. 33. Amuses him with invented stories, xiv. 220. Continues the conference, xv. 326. Discovers himself to Telemachus, xvi. 206. Goes to his palace, xvii. 410. Begs of the suitors, xvii. 438, &c. Beats Irus, xviii. 110. His moral discourse to Amphinomus, xviii. 156. His conference with Penelope, xix. 127. Is discovered by Euryclea, xix. 545. Makes himself known to Eumæus and Philætius, xxi. 211. Draws the bow, xxi. 411. Kills Antinous, xxii. 58. Eurymachus, xxii. 96, &c. Hangs the female servants that were false to him, xxii. 500. Makes himself known to Penelope, xxiii. 211, 240. To Laertes, xxiv. 248, 375. Engages the Ithacans, xxiv. 609. And regains his kingdom, 632.

V.

Vision appears to Nausicca, vi. 25. To Penelope, xix. 626. **Vulcan** surprises Mars and Venus, viii. 315.

W.

Women, when young and beautiful, seldom wise, vii. 379. The evils they occasion, xi. 531. Not to be trusted, 545. Women fond of soldiers, xiv. 246. Fond of the second husband and his children, xv. 25. **Wooden horse**, viii. 553. **Wines of Maron**, ix. 229.

H O M E R's

B A T T L E

OF THE

F R O G S and M I C E.

By Mr. Archdeacon PARNEL.

Corrected by Mr. POPE.

Names of the Mice.

PSYCARPAX, One who plunders granaries.
Troxartes, A bread-eater.
Lychomele, A lick of meal.
Pternotroctas, A bacon-eater.
Lycopinax, A lick of dishes.
Embafichitros, A creeper into pots.
Lychenor, A name from licking.
Troglodytes, One who runs into holes.
Artophagus, Who feeds on bread.
Tyroglyphus, A cheese-scooper.
Pternophagus, A bacon-eater.
Cnissodioctes, One who follows the steam of kitchens.
Sitophagus, An eater of wheat.
Meridarpax, One who plunders his share.

Names of the Frogs.

PHYSIGNATHUS, One who swells his cheeks.
Peleus, A name from mud.
Hydromeduse, A ruler in the waters.
Hypsiboas, A loud bawler.
Pelion, From mud.
Seutlæus, Called from the beets.
Polyphonus, A great babbler.
Lymnocharis, One who loves the lake.
Crambophagus, Cabbage-eater.
Lymnifius, Called from the lake.
Calaminthius, From the herb.
Hydrocharis, Who loves the water.
Borborocates, Who lies in the mud.
Prassophagus, An eater of garlic.
Pelufius, From mud.
Pelobates, Who walks in the dirt.
Prassæus, Called from garlic.
Craugafides, From croaking.

THE
BATTLE
OF THE
FROGS and MICE.
BOOK I.

TO fill my rising song with sacred fire,
Ye tuneful Nine, ye sweet celestial quire!
From Helicon's imbow'ring height repair,
Attend my labours, and reward my pray'r.
The dreadful toils of raging Mars I write, 5
The springs of contest, and the fields of fight;
How threat'ning mice advanc'd with warlike grace,
And wag'd dire combats with the croaking race.
Not louder tumults shook Olympus' tow'rs,
When earth-born giants dar'd immortal pow'rs. 10
These equal acts an equal glory claim,
And thus the muse records the tale of fame.

Once on a time, fatigu'd and out of breath,
And just escap'd the stretching claws of death,
A gentle mouse, whom cats pursu'd in vain, 15
Flies swift-of-foot across the neighb'ring plain,
Hangs o'er a brink his eager thirst to cool,
And dips his whiskers in the standing pool;
When near a courteous frog advanc'd his head,
And from the waters, hoarse resounding said, 20

What art thou, stranger? What the line you boast?
What chance hath cast thee panting on our coast?

With strictest truth let all thy words agree,
 Nor let me find a faithless mouse in thee.
 If worthy friendship, proffer'd friendship take, 25
 And ent'ring view the pleasurable lake:
 Range o'er my palace, in my bounty share,
 And glad return from hospitable fare.
 This silver realm extends beneath my sway,
 And me, their monarch, all its frogs obey. 30
 Great Physignathus I, from Pelius' race,
 Begot in fair Hydromedeuse' embrace,
 Where by the nuptial bank that paints his side,
 The swift Eridanus delights to glide.
 Thee too, thy form, thy strength, and port proclaim,
 A scepter'd king; a son of martial fame; 36
 Then trace thy line, and aid my guessing eyes.
 Thus ceas'd the frog, and thus the mouse replies.
 Known to the gods, the men, the birds that fly
 Thro' wild expanses of the midway sky, 40
 My name resounds; and if unknown to thee,
 The soul of great Psycarpax lives in me.
 Of brave Troxartes' line, whose sleeky down
 In love compress'd Lycomile the brown.
 My mother she, and princess of the plains 45
 Where-e'er her father Pternotroctas reigns:
 Born where a cabin lifts its airy shed,
 With figs, with nuts, with vary'd dainties fed.
 But since our natures nought in common know,
 From what foundation can a friendship grow? 50
 These curling waters o'er thy palace roll;
 But man's high food supports my princely soul.
 In vain the circled loaves attempt to lie
 Conceal'd in flasks from my curious eye;
 In vain the tripe that boasts the whitest hue, 55
 In vain the gilded bacon shuns my view,
 In vain the cheeses, offspring of the pail,
 Or honey'd cakes, which gods themselves regale.

F R O G S and M I C E.

And as in arts I shine, in arms I fight,
 Mix'd with the bravest, and unknown to flight. 60
 Tho' large to mine the human form appear,
 Not man himself can smite my soul with fear;
 Sly to the bed with silent steps I go,
 Attempt his finger, or attack his toe,
 And fix indented wounds with dext'rous skill, 65
 Sleeping he feels, and only seems to feel.
 Yet have we foes which direful dangers cause,
 Grim owls with talons arm'd, and cats with claws;
 And that false trap, the den of silent fate,
 Where death his ambush plants around the bait;
 All dreaded these, and dreadful o'er the rest 70
 The potent warriors of the tabby vest:
 If to the dark we fly, the dark they trace,
 And rend our heroes of the nibbling race.
 But me, nor stalks, nor wat'rish herbs delight, 75
 Nor can the crimson radish charm my sight;
 The lake-refounding frogs selected fare,
 Which not a mouse of any taste can bear.

As thus the downy prince his mind exprest,
 His answer thus the croaking king addrest. 80

Thy words luxuriant on thy dainties rove,
 And, stranger, we can boast of bounteous Jove:
 We sport in water, or we dance on land,
 And born amphibious, food from both command.
 But trust thyself where wonders ask thy view, 85
 And safely tempt those seas, I'll bear thee through:
 Ascend my shoulders, firmly keep thy seat,
 And reach my marshy court, and feast in state.

He said, and leant his back; with nimble bound
 Leaps the light mouse, and clasps his arms around, 90
 Then wond'ring floats, and sees with glad survey
 The winding banks dissemble ports at sea.
 But when aloft the curling water rides,
 And wets with azure wave his downy sides,

6 B A T T L E of the

His thoughts grow conscious of approaching woe, 95
 His idle tears with vain repentance flow,
 His locks he rends, his trembling feet he rears,
 Thick beats his heart with unaccustom'd fears;
 He sighs, and chill'd with danger, longs for shore:
 His tail extended forms a fruitless oar. 100

Half drench'd in liquid death his pray'rs he spake,
 And thus bemoan'd him from the dreadful lake.

So pass'd Europa thro' the rapid sea,
 Trembling and fainting all the vent'rous way;
 With oary feet the bull triumphant rode, 105
 And safe in Crete depos'd his lovely load.

Ah safe at last! may thus the frog support
 My trembling limbs to reach his ample court.

As thus he sorrows, death ambiguous grows,
 Lo! from the deep a water-hydra rose; 110
 He rolls his sanguin'd eyes, his bosom heaves;
 And darts with active rage along the waves.
 Confus'd, the monarch sees his hissing foe,
 And dives to shun the fable fates below.

Forgetful frog! the friend thy shoulders bore, 115
 Unskill'd in swimming, floats remote from shore.
 He grasps with fruitless hands to find relief,
 Supinely falls, and grinds his teeth with grief;
 Plunging he sinks, and struggling mounts again,
 And sinks, and strives, but strives with fate in vain.
 The weighty moisture clogs his hairy vest, 121
 And thus the prince his dying rage express.

Nor thou, that flings me flound'ring from thy back,
 As from hard rocks rebounds the shatt'ring wrack,
 Nor thou shalt 'scape thy due, perfidious king! 125
 Pursu'd by vengeance on the swiftest wing:
 At land thy strength could never equal mine,
 At sea to conquer, and by craft, was thine.
 But heav'n has gods, and gods have searching eyes:
 Ye mice, ye mice, my great avengers rise! 130

This said, he sighing gasp'd, and gasping dy'd,
 His death the young Lycophinax espy'd,
 As on the flow'ry brink he pass'd the day,
 Bask'd in the beam, and loiter'd life away:
 Loud shrieks the mouse, his shrieks the shores repeat;
 The nibbling nation learn their hero's fate: 136
 Grief, dismal grief ensues; deep murmurs sound,
 And shriller fury fills the deafen'd ground;
 From lodge to lodge the sacred heralds run,
 To fix their council with the rising sun; 140
 Where great Troxartes crown'd in glory reigns,
 And winds his length'ning court beneath the plains:
 Psycarpax' father, father now no more!
 For poor Psycarpax lies remote from shore:
 Supine he lies! the silent waters stand, 145
 And no kind billow wafts the dead to land!

B O O K II.

WHEN rosy-finger'd morn had ting'd the clouds,
 Around their monarch-mouse the nation crowds,
 Slow rose the monarch, heav'd his anxious breast,
 And thus, the council fill'd with rage, addrest.
 For lost Psycarpax much my soul endures, 5
 'Tis mine the private grief, the public, yours;
 Three warlike sons adorn'd my nuptial bed,
 Three sons, alas, before their father dead!
 Our eldest perish'd by the rav'ning cat,
 As near my court the prince unheedful sat. 10
 Our next, an engine fraught with danger drew,
 The portal gap'd, the bait was hung in view,
 Dire arts assist the trap, the fates decoy,
 And men unpitying kill'd my gallant boy.

The last, his country's hope, his parents pride, 13
Plung'd in the lake by Phrygnathus, dy'd.

Rouse all the war, my friends! avenge the deed,
And bleed that monarch, and his nation bleed.

His words in ev'ry breast inspir'd alarms,
And careful Mars supply'd their host with arms. 20

In verdant hulls despoil'd of all their beans,
The buskin'd warriors stalk'd along the plains,
Quills aptly bound, their bracing corselet made,
Fac'd with the plunder of a cat they slay'd;

The lamp's round boss affords their ample shield, 25
Large shells of nuts their cov'ring helmet yield;

And o'er the region, with reflected rays,
Tall groves of needles for their lances blaze.

Dreadful in arms the marching mice appear:
The wond'ring frogs perceive the tumult near, 30

Forfake the waters, thick'ning form a ring,
And ask, and hearken, whence the noises spring;

When near the crowd, disclos'd to public view,
The valiant chief Embasichytros drew:

The sacred herald's scepter grac'd his hand, 35
And thus his words express his king's command.

Ye frogs! the mice with vengeance fir'd, advance,
And deckt in armour shake the shining lance;

Their hapless prince by Phrygnathus slain,
Extends incumbent on the wat'ry plain, 40

Then arm your host, the doubtful battle try;
Lead forth those frogs that have the soul to die.

The chief retires, the crowd the challenge hear,
And proudly swelling, yet perplex'd appear;
Much they resent, yet much their monarch blame, 45
Who rising, spoke to clear his tainted fame.

O friends! I never forc'd the mouse to death,
Nor saw the gaspings of his latest breath.

He, vain of youth, our art of swimming try'd,
And vent'rous in the lake the wanton dy'd. 50

To vengeance now by false appearance led,
They point their anger at my guiltless head.
But wage the rising war by deep device,
And turn its fury on the crafty mice.
Your king directs the way; my thoughts elate 55
With hopes of conquest, form designs of fate.
Where high the banks their verdant surface heave,
And the steep sides confine the sleeping wave,
There, near the margin, and in armour bright,
Sustain the first impetuous shocks of fight: 60
Then where the dancing feather joins the crest,
Let each brave frog his obvious mouse arrest;
Each strongly grasping, headlong plunge a foe,
'Till countless circles whirl the lake below;
Down sink the mice in yielding waters drown'd; 65
Loud flash the waters; echoing shores resound:
The frogs triumphant tread the conquer'd plain,
And raise their glorious trophies of the slain.
He spake no more, his prudent scheme imparts
Redoubling ardour to the boldest hearts. 70
Green was the suit his arming heroes chose,
Around their legs the greaves of mallows close,
Green were the beets about their shoulders laid,
And green the colewort, which the target made,
Form'd of the vary'd shells the waters yield, 75
Their glossy helmets glisten'd o'er the field;
And tap'ring sea-reeds for the polish'd spear,
With upright order pierc'd the ambient air.
Thus dress'd for war, they take th' appointed height,
Poize the long arms, and urg'd the promis'd fight. 80
But now, where Jove's irradiate spires arise,
With stars surrounded in æthereal skies,
(A solemn council call'd) the brazen gates
Unbar; the gods assume their golden seats:
The spire superiour leans, and points to show 85
What wond'rous combats mortals wage below:

How strong, how large, the num'rous heroes stride;
 What length of lance they shake with warlike pride:
 What eager fire their rapid march reveals;
 So the fierce Centaurs ravag'd o'er the dales; 90
 And so confirm'd, the daring Titans rose,
 Heap'd hills on hills, and bid the gods be foes.

This seen, the pow'r his sacred visage rears,
 He casts a pitying smile on worldly cares,
 And asks what heav'nly guardians take the list, 95
 Or who the mice, or who the frogs assist?

Then thus to Pallas. If my daughter's mind
 Have join'd the mice, why stays she still behind?
 Drawn forth by fav'ry steams they wind their way,
 And sure attendance round thine altar pay, 100
 Where while the victims gratify their taste,
 They sport to please the goddess of the feast.

Thus spake the ruler of the spacious skies,
 When thus, resolv'd, the blue-ey'd maid replies.
 In vain, my father! all their dangers plead; 105
 To such, thy Pallas never grants her aid.
 My flow'ry wreaths they petulantly spoil,
 And rob my crystal lamps of feeding oil:
 (Ills following ill) but what afflicts me more,
 My veil, that idle race profanely tore. 110
 The web was curious, wrought with art divine;
 Relentless wretches! all the work was mine:
 Along the loom the purple warp I spread,
 Cast the light shoot, and crost the silver thread.
 In this their teeth a thousand breaches tear; 115
 The thousand breaches skilful hands repair;
 For which, vile earthly duns thy daughter grieve:
 But gods, that use no coin, have none to give;
 And learning's goddesses never less can owe;
 Neglected learning gets no wealth below. 120
 Nor let the frogs to gain my succour sue,
 Those clam'rous fools have lost my favour too.

For late, when all the conflict ceas'd at night,
 When my stretch'd sinews ach'd with eager fight,
 When spent with glorious toil, I left the field, 125
 And sunk for slumber on my swelling shield;
 Lo from the deep, repelling sweet repose,
 With noisy croakings half the nation rose:
 Devoid of rest, with aching brows I lay,
 'Till cocks proclaim'd the crimson dawn of day. 130
 Let all, like me, from either host forbear,
 Nor tempt the flying furies of the spear.
 Let heav'nly blood (or what for blood may flow)
 Adorn the conquest of a meaner foe,
 Who, wildly rushing, meet the wond'rous odds, 135
 Tho' gods oppose; and brave the wounded gods.
 O'er gilded clouds reclin'd, the danger view,
 And be the wars of mortal scenes for you.
 So mov'd the blue-ey'd queen, her words persuade,
 Great Jove assented, and the rest obey'd. 140

B O O K III.

NOW front to front the marching armies shine,
 Halt ere they meet, and form the length'ning line;
 The chiefs conspicuous seen, and heard afar,
 Give the loud sign to loose the rushing war;
 Their dreadful trumpets deep-mouth'd hornets sound, 5
 The founded charge remurmurs o'er the ground;
 Ev'n Jove proclaims a field of horror nigh,
 And rolls low thunder thro' the troubled sky.

First to the fight the large Hypsiboas flew,
 And brave Lychenor with a jav'lin flew; 10
 The luckless warrior, fill'd with gen'rous flame,
 Stood foremost glitt'ring in the post of fame.

When in his liver struck, the jav'lin hung;
 The mouse fell thund'ring, and the target rung :
 Prone to the ground he sinks his closing eye, 15
 And, soil'd in dust, his lovely tresses lie.
 A spear at Pelion; Troglodytes cast;
 The missive spear within the bosom past;
 Death's sable shades the fainting frog surround,
 And life's red tide runs ebbing from the wound. 20
 Embasichytros felt Scutlæus' dart
 Transfix, and quiver in his panting heart;
 But great Artophagus aveng'd the slain,
 And big Scutlæus tumbling loads the plain,
 And Polyphonus dies, a frog renown'd 25
 For boastful speech and turbulence of sound;
 Deep thro' the belly pierc'd, supine he lay,
 And breath'd his soul against the face of day.
 The strong Lymnocharis, who view'd with ire,
 A victor triumph, and a friend expire; 30
 With heaving arms a rocky fragment caught,
 And fiercely flung where Troglodytes fought,
 A warrior vers'd in arts, of sure retreat,
 Yet arts in vain elude impending fate;
 Full on his sinewy neck the fragment fell, 35
 And o'er his eye-lids clouds eternal dwell.
 Lychenor (second of the glorious name)
 Striding advanc'd, and took no wand'ring aim;
 Thro' all the frog the shining jav'lin flies,
 And near the vanquish'd mouse the victor dies. 40
 The dreadful stroke Crambophagus affrights,
 Long bred to banquets, less inur'd to fights;
 Heedless he runs, and stumbles o'er the steep,
 And wildly flound'ring flashes up the deep:
 Lychenor, following, with a downward blow 45
 Reach'd, in the lake, his unrecover'd foe;
 Gasping he rolls, a purple stream of blood
 Distains the surface of the silver flood;
 Thro' the wide wound the rushing entrails throng,
 And slow the breathless carcass floats along. 50
 Lymnifius good Tyroglyphus assails,
 Prince of the mice that haunt the flow'ry vales,

Lost to the milky fares and rural seat,
 He came to perish on the bank of fate.
 The dread Pternoglyphus demands the fight, 55
 Which tender Calaminthus shuns by flight,
 Drops the green target, springing quits the foe,
 Glides thro' the lake, and safely dives below.
 The dire Pternophagus divides his way
 Thro' breaking ranks, and leads the dreadful day; 60
 No nibbling prince excell'd in fierceness more,
 His parents fed him on the savage boar:
 But where his lance the field with blood imbru'd,
 Swift as he mov'd Hydrocharis pursu'd,
 'Till fall'n in death he lies; a shatt'ring stone 65
 Sounds on the neck, and crushes all the bone;
 His blood pollutes the verdure of the plain,
 And from his nostrils bursts the gushing brain.
 Lycopinax with Borbocætes fights
 A blameless frog, whom humbler life delights; 70
 The fatal jav'lin unrelenting flies,
 And darkness seals the gentle croaker's eyes.
 Incens'd Prassophagus, with sprightly bound,
 Bears Cnissodioctes off the rising ground;
 Then drags him o'er the lake, depriv'd of breath; 75
 And, downward plunging, sinks his soul to death.
 But now the great Psycarpax shines afar,
 (Scarce he so great whose loss provok'd the war)
 Swift to revenge his fatal jav'lin fled,
 And thro' the liver struck Pelusius dead; 80
 His freckled corps before the victor fell,
 His soul indignant sought the shades of hell.
 This saw Pelobates, and from the flood,
 Lifts with both hands a monstrous mass of mud.
 The cloud obscene o'er all the warrior flies, 85
 Dishonours his brown face, and blots his eyes.
 Enrag'd, and wildly sputt'ring, from the shore
 A stone immense of size the warrior bore;
 A load for lab'ring earth, whose bulk to raise,
 Asks ten degen'rate mice of modern days: 90
 Full to the leg arrives the crushing wound;
 The frog, supportless, writhes upon the ground.

Thus flush'd, the victor wars with matchless force,
 'Till loud Craugasides arrests his course :
 Hoarse croaking threats precede ; with fatal speed 95
 Deep thro' the belly runs the pointed reed,
 Then, strongly-tug'd, return'd imbru'd with gore ;
 And on the pile his reeking entrails bore.
 The lame Sitophagus, oppress'd with pain,
 Creeps from the desp'rate dangers of the plain : 100
 And where the ditches rising weeds supply,
 To spread their lowly shades beneath the sky ;
 There lurks the silent mouse reliev'd of heat,
 And, safe imbower'd, avoids the chance of fate.
 But here Troxartes, Physignathus there, 105
 Whirl the dire furies of the pointed spear :
 Then where the foot around its ankle plies,
 Troxartes wounds, and Physignathus flies,
 Halts to the pool, a safe retreat to find,
 And trails a dangling length of leg behind. 110
 The mouse still urges, still the frog retires,
 And half in anguish of the flight expires ;
 Then pious ardour young Prassæus brings,
 Betwixt the fortune of contending kings :
 Lank, harmless frog ! with forces hardly grown, 115
 He darts the reed in combats not his own,
 Which faintly tinkling on Troxartes' shield,
 Hangs at the point, and drops upon the field.
 Now nobly tow'ring o'er the rest appears
 A gallant prince that far transcends his years, 120
 Pride of his fire, and glory of his house,
 And more a Mars in combat than a mouse :
 His action bold, robust his ample frame,
 And Meridarpax his resounding name.
 The warrior, singled from the fighting crowd, 125
 Boasts the dire honours of his arms aloud ;
 Then strutting near the lake, with looks elate,
 Threats all its nations with approaching fate.
 And such his strength, the silver lakes around,
 Might roll their waters o'er unpeopled ground. 130
 But pow'rful Jove who shews no less his grace
 To frogs that perish, than to human race,

Felt soft compassion rising in his soul,
And shook his sacred head, that shook the pole.
Then thus to all the gazing pow'rs began, 135
The fire of gods, and frogs, and mouse, and man.

What seas of blood I view, what worlds of slain?
An Iliad rising from a day's campaign!
How fierce his jav'lin, o'er the trembling lakes,
The black-fur'd hero, Meridarpax, shakes! 140
Unless some fav'ring deity descend,
Soon will the frogs loquacious empire end.
Let dreadful Pallas wing'd with pity fly,
And make her ægis blaze before his eye:
While Mars, refulgent on his rattling car, 145
Arrests his raging rival of the war.

He ceas'd, reclining with attentive head,
When thus the glorious god of combats said.
Nor Pallas, Jove! tho' Pallas take the field,
With all the terrours of her hissing shield; 150
Nor Mars himself, tho' Mars in armour bright
Ascend his car, and wheel amidst the fight;
Not these can drive the desp'rate mouse afar,
And change the fortunes of the bleeding war.
Let all go forth, all heav'n in arms arise; 155
Or launch thy own red thunder from the skies:
Such ardent bolts as flew that wond'rous day,
When heaps of Titans mix'd with mountains lay;
When all the giant-race enormous fell;
And huge Enceladus was hurl'd to hell. 160

'Twas thus th' armipotent advis'd the gods,
When from his throne the cloud-compeller nods;
Deep length'ning thunders run from pole to pole,
Olympus trembles as the thunders roll.
Then swift he whirls the brandish'd bolt around, 165
And headlong darts it at the distant ground;
The bolt, discharg'd, inwrap'd with lightning flies,
And rends its flaming passage thro' the skies:
Then earth's inhabitants, the nibblers, shake;
And frogs, the dwellers in the waters quake. 170
Yet still the mice advance their dread design,
And the last danger threatens the croaking line;

'Till Jove, that inly mourn'd the loss they bore,
With strange assistance fill'd the frightened shore.

Pour'd from the neighb'ring strand, deform'd to view,
They march, a sudden unexpected crew. 176

Strong suits of armour round their bodies close,
Which like thick anvils blunt the force of blows;
In wheeling marches turn'd, oblique they go;
With happy claws their limbs divide below; 180

Fell sheers the passage to their mouth command;
From out the flesh the bones by nature stand:
Broad spread their backs, their shining shoulders rise,

Unnumber'd joints distort their lengthen'd thighs,
With nervous cords their hands are firmly brac'd, 185

Their round black eye-balls in their bosom plac'd,
On eight long feet the wond'rous warriors tread,
And either end alike supplies a head.

These to call crabs, mere mortal wits agree;
But gods have other names for things than we. 190

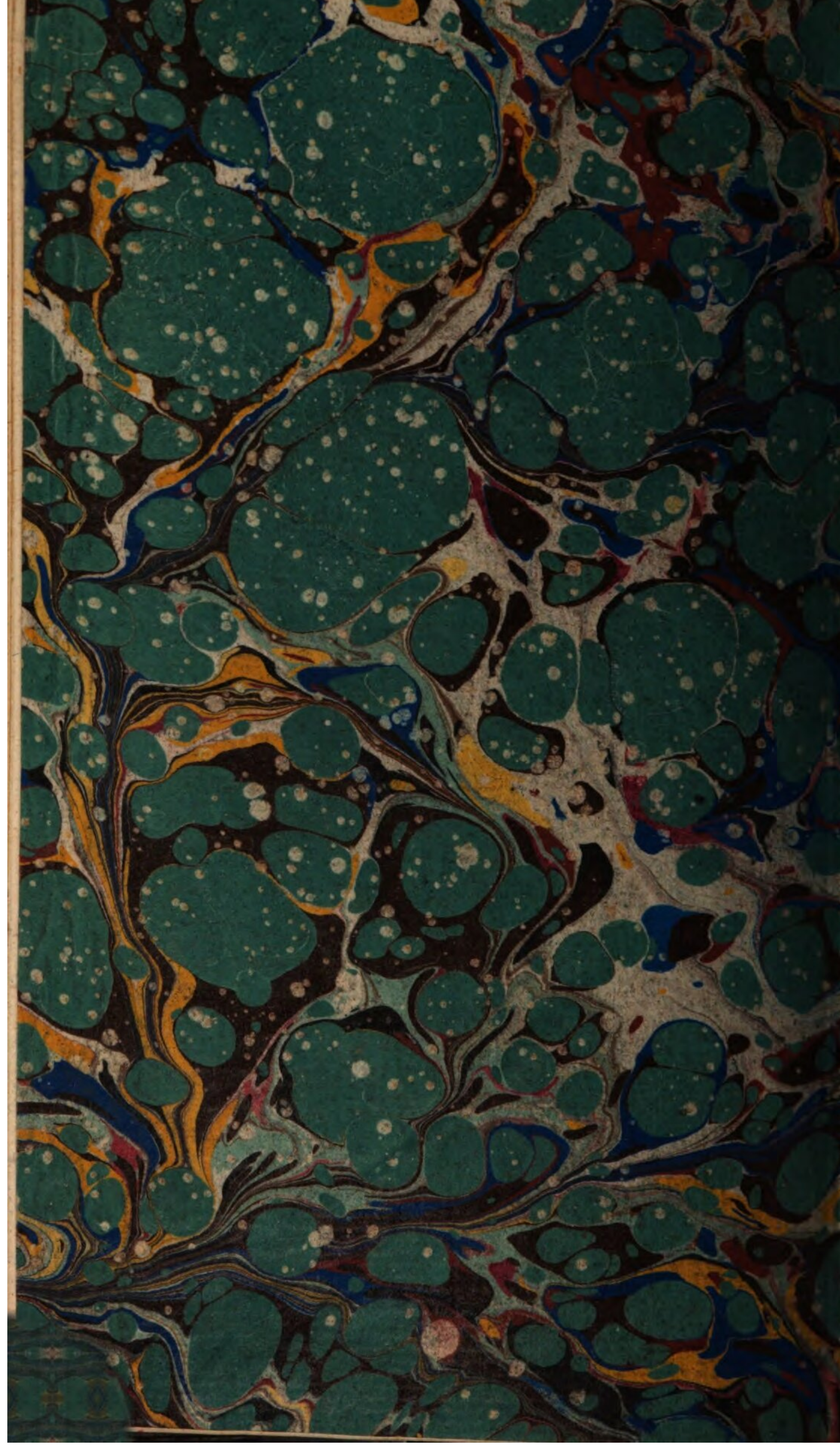
Now, where the jointures from their loins depend,
The heroes tails with sev'ring grasps they rend.
Here, short of feet, depriv'd the power to fly;
There, without hands, upon the field they lie.
Wrench'd from their holds, and scatter'd all around,
The bended lances heap the cumber'd ground. 196

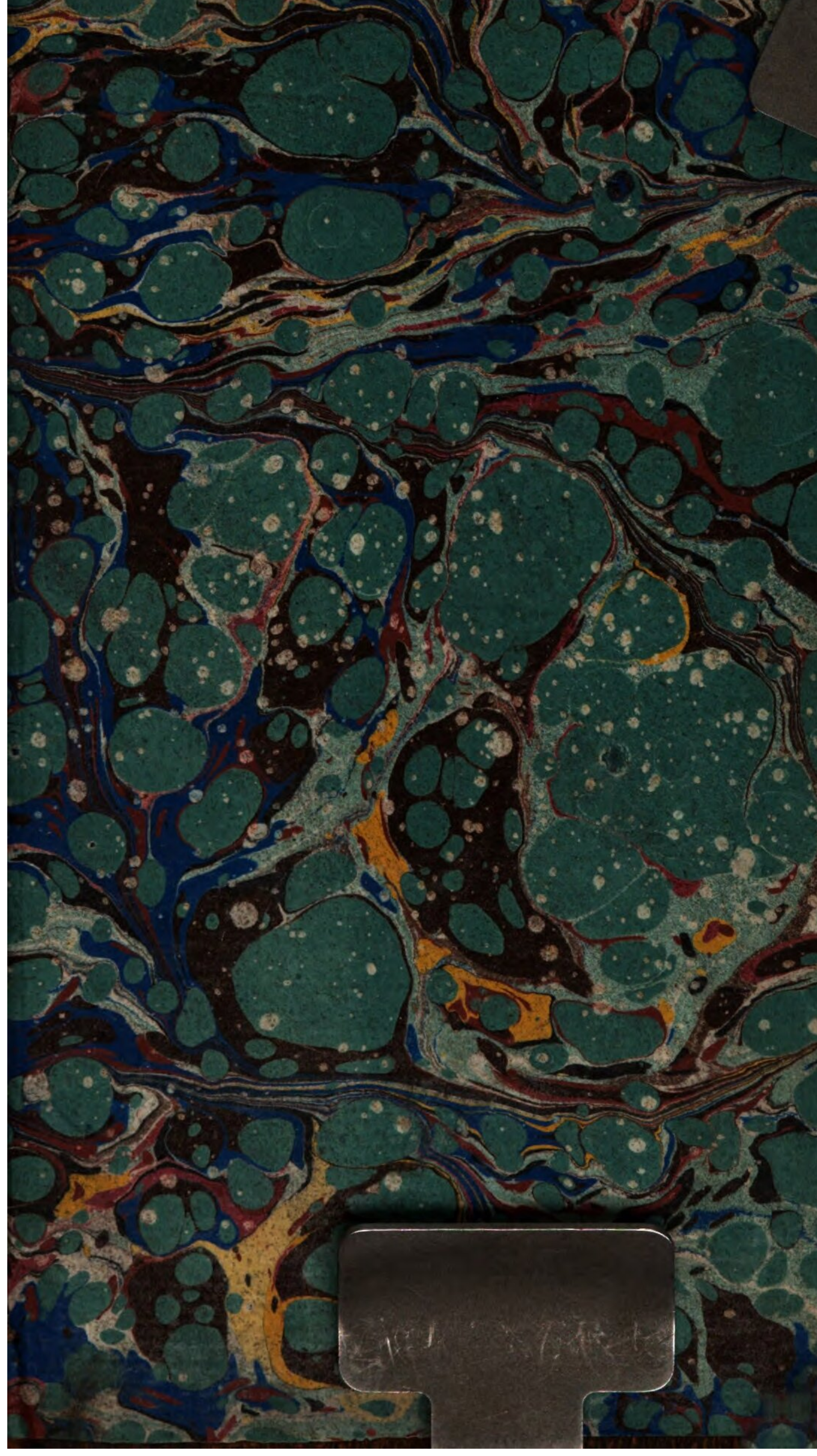
Helpless amazement, fear pursuing fear,
And mad confusion thro' their host appear;
O'er the wild waste with headlong flight they go,
Or creep conceal'd in vaulted holes below. 200

But down Olympus, to the western seas,
Far-shooting Phœbus drove with fainter rays;
And a whole war (so Jove ordain'd) begun,
Was fought, and ceas'd, in one revolving sun.

F I N I S.

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Homerus, ca. v8. Jh.

The Odyssey

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